





THE
DRAMATIC WORKS
OF
SIR JOHN VANBRUGH.

*Separate from
Hist. & L. of Vanbrugh's works of
M. J. Charley, Comptroller & Sec. London, 1840*

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THE RELAPSE; OR, VIRTUE IN DANGER.

A Comedy.

BEING THE SEQUEL OF "THE FOOL IN FASHION."

THE PREFACE.

To go about to excuse half the defects this abortive brat is come into the world with, would be to provoke the town with a long useless preface, when 'tis, I doubt, sufficiently soured already by a tedious play.

I do therefore (with all the humility of a repenting sinner) confess, it wants everything—but length; and in that, I hope, the severest critic will be pleased to acknowledge I have not been wanting. But my modesty will sure atone for everything, when the world shall know it is so great, I am even to this day insensible of those two shining graces in the play (which some part of the town is pleased to compliment me with)—blasphemy and bawdy.

For my part, I cannot find them out. If there were any obscene expressions upon the stage, here they are in the print; for I have dealt fairly, I have not sunk a syllable that could (though by racking of mysteries) be ranged under that head; and yet I believe with a steady faith, there is not one woman of a real reputation in town, but when she has read it impartially over in her closet, will find it so innocent, she'll think it no affront to her prayer-book, to lay it upon the same shelf. So to them (with all manner of deference) I entirely refer my cause; and I'm confident they'll justify me against those pretenders to good manners, who, at the same time, have so little respect for the ladies, they would extract a bawdy jest from an ejaculation, to put 'em out of countenance. But I expect to have these well-bred persons always my enemies, since I'm sure I shall never write anything lowd enough to make 'em my friends.

As for the saints (your thorough-paced ones, I mean, with screwed faces and wry mouths) I despair of them, for they are friends to nobody. They love nothing but their altars and themselves. They have too much zeal to have any charity; they make debauches in piety, as sinners do in wine; and are as quarrelsome in their religion, as other people are in their drink: so I hope nobody will mind what they say. But if any man (with flat plod shoes, a little band, greasy hair, and a dirty face, who is wiser than I, at the expense of being forty years older) happens to be offended at a story of a cock and a bull, and a priest and a bull-dog, I beg his pardon with all my heart; which, I hope, I shall obtain, by eating my words, and making this public recantation. I do therefore, for his satisfaction, acknowledge I lied, when I said, they never quit their hold; for in that little time I have lived in the world, I thank God I have seen 'em forced to it more than once: but next time I'll speak with more caution and truth, and only say, they have very good teeth.

If I have offended any honest gentlemen of the town, whose friendship or good word is worth the having, I am very sorry for it; I hope they'll correct me as gently as they can, when they consider I have had no other design, in running a very great risk, than to divert (if possible) some part of their spleen, in spite of their wives and their taxes.

One word more about the bawdy, and I have done. I own the first night this thing was acted, some indecencies had like to have happened, but 'twas not my fault.

The fine gentleman of the play, drinking his mistress's health in Nantes brandy, from six in the morning to the time he waddled on upon the stage in the evening, had toasted himself up to such a pitch of vigour, I confess I once gave Amanda for gone, and am since (with all due respect to Mrs. Rogers) very sorry she scaped; for I am confident a certain lady (let no one take it to herself that's handsome) who highly blames the play, for the barrenness of the conclusion, would then have allowed it a very natural close.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

SIR NOVELTY FASHION, *newly created* LORD FOPPINGTON.

TOM FASHION, *his Brother.*

LOVELESS, *Husband to AMANDA.*

WORTHY, *a Gentleman of the Town.*

SIR TUNBELLY CLUMSEY, *a Country Gentleman.*

SIR JOHN FRIENDLY, *his Neighbour.*

COUPLER, *a Match-maker.*

BULL, *Chaplain to SIR TUNBELLY.*

SYRINGE, *a Surgeon.*

LORY, *Servant to TOM FASHION.*

LA VEROLE, *Valet to LORD FOPPINGTON.*

MENDLESS, *a Hosier.*

FORETOP, *a Periwig-maker.*

TUG, *a Waterman.*

AMANDA, *Wife to LOVELESS.*

BERINTHIA, *her Cousin, a young Widow.*

MISS HOYDEN, *a great Fortune, Daughter to SIR TUNBELLY.*

NUTSE, *her Governante.*

MRS. CALICO, *a Sempstress.*

ABIGAIL, *Maid to BERINTHIA.*

Shoemaker, Tailor, Constable, Clerk, Porter, Page, Musicians, Dancers, &c.

SCENE.—SOMETIMES IN LONDON, SOMETIMES IN THE COUNTRY.

FIRST PROLOGUE.

SPOKEN BY MISS CROSS.

LADIES, this Play in too much haste was writ,
To be o'ercharged with either plot or wit;
'Twas got, conceived, and born in six weeks'
space,
And wit, you know, 's as slow in growth as—
grace.
Sure it can ne'er be ripen'd to your taste;
I doubt 'twill prove, our author bred too fast:
For mark 'em well, who with the Muses marry,
They rarely do conceive, but they miscarry.
'Tis the hard fate of those who are big with rhyme,
Still to be brought to bed before their time.
Of our late poets Nature few has made;
The greatest part are—only so by trade.
Still want of something brings the scribbling fit;
For want of money some of 'em have writ,
And others do't, you see, for—want of wit.
Honour, they fancy, summons 'em to write,

So out they lug in wresty Nature's spite,
As some of you spruce beaux do—when you fight.
Yet let the ebb of wit be ne'er so low,
Some glimpse of it a man may hope to show,
Upon a theme so ample as—a beau.
So, howsoever true courage may decay,
Perhaps there's not one smock-face here to-day,
But's bold as Cæsar—to attack a play.
Nay, what's yet more, with an undaunted face,
To do the thing with more heroic grace,
'Tis six to four ye attack the strongest place.
You are such Hotspurs in this kind of venture,
Where there's no breach, just there you needs must
enter:
But be advised—
E'en give the hero and the critic o'er,
For Nature sent you on another score;—
She form'd her beau, for nothing but her whore.

PROLOGUE ON THE THIRD DAY.

SPOKEN BY MRS. VERBRUGGEN.

APOLOGIES for Plays, experience shows,
Are things almost as useless as—the beaux.
Whate'er we say (like them) we neither move
Your friendship, pity, anger, nor your love.
'Tis interest turns the globe; let us but find
The way to please you, and you'll soon be kind:
But to expect, you'd for our sakes approve,
Is just as though you for their sakes should love;
And that, we do confess, we think a task
Which (though they may impose) we never ought
to ask.

This is an age, where all things we improve,
But, most of all, the art of making love.
In former days, women were only won
By merit, truth, and constant service done;
But lovers now are much more expert grown;
They seldom wait, to approach by tedious form;
They're for despatch, for taking you by storm:
Quick are their sieges, furious are their fires,
Fierce their attacks, and boundless their desires.
Before the Play's half ended, I'll engage
To show you beaux come crowding on the stage,
Who with so little pains have always sped,
They'll undertake to look a lady dead.

How have I shook, and trembling stood with
awe,
When here, behind the scenes, I've seen 'em
draw
—A comb; that dead-doing weapon to the heart,
And turn each powder'd hair into a dart!
When I have seen 'em sally on the stage,
Dress'd to the war, and ready to engage,
I've mourn'd your destiny—yet more their fate,
To think, that after victories so great,
It should so often prove their hard mishap
To sneak into a lane, and get—a clap.
But, hush! they're here already; I'll retire,
And leave 'em to the ladies to admire.
They'll show you twenty thousand arts and graces,
They'll entertain you with their soft grimaces,
Their snuff box, awkward bows, and—ugly faces.
In short, they're after all so much your friends,
That lest the Play should fail, the author ends;
They have resolved to make you some amends.
Between each act (perform'd by nicest rules)
They'll treat you with—an Interlude of fools:
Of which that you may have the deeper sense,
The entertainment's—at their own expense.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A Room in LOVELESS's Country-House.**Enter LOVELESS, reading.*

Love. How true is that philosophy, which says
Our heaven is seated in our minds!
Through all the roving pleasures of my youth,
(Where nights and days seem all consumed in joy,
Where the false face of luxury
Display'd such charms,

As might have shaken the most holy hermit,
And made him totter at his altar,)
I never knew one moment's peace like this.
Here, in this little soft retreat,
My thoughts unbent from all the cares of life,
Content with fortune,
Eased from the grating duties of dependence,
From envy free, ambition under foot,
The raging flame of wild destructive lust
Reduced to a warm pleasing fire of lawful love,
My life glides on, and all is well within.

Enter AMANDA.

How does the happy cause of my content,
[Meeting her kindly.]

My dear Amanda?

You find me musing on my happy state,
 And full of grateful thoughts to Heaven, and you.

Aman. Those grateful offerings Heaven can't
 receive

With more delight than I do:

Would I could share with it as well

The dispensations of its bliss!

That I might search its choicest favours out,

And shower 'em on your head for ever.

Love. The largest boons that Heaven thinks fit
 to grant,

To things it has decreed shall crawl on earth,

Are in the gift of woman form'd like you.

Perhaps when time shall be no more,

When the aspiring soul shall take its flight,

And drop this ponderous lump of clay behind it,

It may have appetites we know not of,

And pleasures as refined as its desires—

But till that day of knowledge shall instruct me,

The utmost blessing that my thought can reach,
[Taking her in his arms.]

Is folded in my arms, and rooted in my heart.

Aman. There let it grow for ever!

Love. Well said, Amanda—let it be for ever—

Would Heaven grant that—

Aman. 'Twere all the heaven I'd ask.

But we are clad in black mortality,

And the dark curtain of eternal night

At last must drop between us.

Love. It must.

That mournful separation we must see,
 A bitter pill it is to all; but doubles its ungrateful
 taste,

When lovers are to swallow it.

Aman. Perhaps that pain may only be my lot,

You possibly may be exempted from it.

Men find out softer ways to quench their fires.

Love. Can you then doubt my constancy,
 Amanda?

You'll find 'tis built upon a steady basis—

The rock of reason now supports my love,

On which it stands so fix'd,

The rudest hurricane of wild desire

Would, like the breath of a soft slumbering babe,

Pass by, and never shake it.

Aman. Yet still 'tis safer to avoid the storm;

The strongest vessels, if they put to sea,

May possibly be lost.

Would I could keep you here in this calm port for
 ever!

Forgive the weakness of a woman,

I am uneasy at your going to stay so long in town;

I know its false insinuating pleasures;

I know the force of its delusions;

I know the strength of its attacks;

I know the weak defence of nature;

I know you are a man—and I—a wife.

Love. You know then all that needs to give you
 rest,

For wife's the strongest claim that you can urge.

When you would plead your title to my heart,

On this you may depend. Therefore be calm,

Banish your fears, for they

Are traitors to your peace: beware of them,

They are insinuating busy things

That gossip to and fro,

And do a world of mischief where they come.

But you shall soon be mistress of 'em all;

I'll aid you with such arms for their destruction,

They never shall erect their heads again.

You know the business is indispensable, that obliges

me to go for London; and you have no reason,

that I know of, to believe that I'm glad of the

occasion. For my honest conscience is my witness,

I have found a due succession of such charms

In my retirement here with you,

I have never thrown one roving thought that way.

But since, against my will, I'm dragg'd once more

To that uneasy theatre of noise,

I am resolved to make such use on't,

As shall convince you 'tis an old cast mistress,

Who has been so lavish of her favours,

She's now grown bankrupt of her charms,

And has not one allurement left to move me.

Aman. Her bow, I do believe, is grown so weak

Her arrows (at this distance) cannot hurt you;

But in approaching 'em, you give 'em strength.

The dart that has not far to fly, will put

The best of armour to a dangerous trial.

Love. That trial past, and you're at ease for ever;

When you have seen the helmet proved,

You'll apprehend no more for him that wears it.

Therefore, to put a lasting period to your fears,

I am resolved, this once, to launch into temptation:

I'll give you an essay of all my virtues,

My former boon companions of the bottle

Shall fairly try what charms are left in wine:

I'll take my place amongst them,

They shall hem me in,

Sing praises to their god, and drink his glory:

Turn wild enthusiasts for his sake,

And beasts to do him honour:

Whilst I, a stubborn atheist,

Sullenly look on,

Without one reverend glass to his divinity.

That for my temperance,

Then for my constancy—

Aman. Ay, there take heed.

Love. Indeed the danger's small.

Aman. And yet my fears are great.

Love. Why are you so timorous?

Aman. Because you are so bold.

Love. My courage should disperse your apprehension.

Aman. My apprehensions should alarm your courage.

Love. Fy, fy, Amanda! it is not kind thus to distrust me.

Aman. And yet my fears are founded on my love.

Love. Your love then is not founded as it ought;

For if you can believe 'tis possible

I should again relapse to my past follies,

I must appear to you a thing

Of such an undigested composition,

That but to think of me with inclination,

Would be a weakness in your taste

Your virtue scarce could answer.

Aman. 'Twould be a weakness in my tongue;

My prudence could not answer,

If I should press you farther with my fears;

I'll therefore trouble you no longer with 'em.

Love. Nor shall they trouble you much longer,

A little time shall show you they were groundless:

This winter shall be the fiery trial of my virtue;

Which, when it once has pass'd,
You'll be convinced 'twas of no false allay,
There all your cares will end.

Aman.

Pray Heaven they may.

[*Exeunt, hand in hand.*]

SCENE II.—*Whitehall.*

Enter TOM FASHION, LORY, and TUG.

Fash. Come, pay the waterman, and take the portmanteau.

Lory. Faith, sir, I think the waterman had as good take the portmanteau, and pay himself.

Fash. Why, sure there's something left in't!

Lory. But a solitary old waistcoat, upon my honour, sir.

Fash. Why, what's become of the blue coat, sirrah?

Lory. Sir, 'twas eaten at Gravesend; the reckoning came to thirty shillings, and your privy purse was worth but two half-crowns.

Fash. 'Tis very well.

Tug. Pray, master, will you please to despatch me?

Fash. Ay, here a—canst thou change me a guinea?

Lory. [*Aside.*] Good!

Tug. Change a guinea, master! Ha! ha! your honour's pleased to compliment.

Fash. Egad, I don't know how I shall pay thee then, for I have nothing but gold about me.

Lory. [*Aside.*] Hum, hum!

Fash. What dost thou expect, friend?

Tug. Why, master, so far against wind and tide is richly worth half a piece.

Fash. Why, faith, I think thou art a good conscionable fellow. Egad, I begin to have so good an opinion of thy honesty, I care not if I leave my portmanteau with thee, till I send thee thy money.

Tug. Ha! God bless your honour; I should be as willing to trust you, master, but that you are, as a man may say, a stranger to me, and these are nimble times; there are a great many sharpers stirring.—[*Taking up the portmanteau.*] Well, master, when your worship sends the money, your portmanteau shall be forthcoming; my name's Tug, my wife keeps a brandy-shop in Drab-Alley, at Wapping.

Fash. Very well; I'll send for't to-morrow.

[*Exit Tug.*]

Lory. So.—Now, sir, I hope you'll own yourself a happy man, you have outlived all your cares.

Fash. How so, sir?

Lory. Why you have nothing left to take care of.

Fash. Yes, sirrah, I have myself and you to take care of still.

Lory. Sir, if you could but prevail with somebody else to do that for you, I fancy we might both fare the better for't.

Fash. Why, if thou canst tell me where to apply myself, I have at present so little money, and so much humility about me, I don't know but I may follow a fool's advice.

Lory. Why then, sir, your fool advises you to lay aside all animosity, and apply to sir Novelty, your elder brother.

Fash. Damn my elder brother!

Lory. With all my heart; but get him to redeem your annuity however.

Fash. My annuity! 'Sdeath, he's such a dog, he would not give his powder-puff to redeem my soul.

Lory. Look you, sir, you must wheedle him, or you must starve.

Fash. Look you, sir, I will neither wheedle him, nor starve.

Lory. Why, what will you do then?

Fash. I'll go into the army.

Lory. You can't take the oaths; you are a Jacobite.

Fash. Thou mayst as well say I can't take orders because I'm an atheist.

Lory. Sir, I ask your pardon; I find I did not know the strength of your conscience so well as I did the weakness of your purse.

Fash. Methinks, sir, a person of your experience should have known that the strength of the conscience proceeds from the weakness of the purse.

Lory. Sir, I am very glad to find you have a conscience able to take care of us, let it proceed from what it will; but I desire you'll please to consider, that the army alone will be but a scanty maintenance for a person of your generosity (at least as rents now are paid). I shall see you stand in damnable need of some auxiliary guineas for your *menus plaisirs*; I will therefore turn fool once more for your service, and advise you to go directly to your brother.

Fash. Art thou then so impregnable a blockhead, to believe he'll help me with a farthing?

Lory. Not if you treat him *de haut en bas*, as you use to do.

Fash. Why, how wouldst have me treat him?

Lory. Like a trout—tickle him.

Fash. I can't flatter.

Lory. Can you starve?

Fash. Yes.

Lory. I can't.—Good-by t'ye, sir— [*Going.*]

Fash. Stay; thou wilt distract me! What wouldst thou have me say to him?

Lory. Say nothing to him, apply yourself to his favourites, speak to his periwig, his cravat, his feather, his snuff box, and when you are well with them, desire him to lend you a thousand pounds. I'll engage you prosper.

Fash. 'Sdeath and furies! why was that cockcomb thrust into the world before me? O Fortune! Fortune!—thou art a bitch by Gad! [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.—*A Room in Lord Foppington's House.*

Enter Lord Foppington in his nightgown.

Lord Fop. Page!

Enter Page.

Page. Sir!

Lord Fop. Sir!—Pray, sir, do me the favour to teach your tongue the title the king has thought fit to honour me with.

Page. I ask your lordship's pardon, my lord.

Lord Fop. O, you can pronounce the word then? I thought it would have choked you.—D'ye hear?

Page. My lord!

Lord Fop. Call La Verole; I would dress.— [*Exit Page.*—Well, 'tis an unspeakable pleasure to be a man of quality, strike me dumb!—My lord,

—your lordship! My lord Foppington!—Ah! *c'est quelque chose de beau, que le diable m'emporte!*—Why the ladies were ready to puke at me whilst I had nothing but sir Navelty to recommend me to 'em.—Sure, whilst I was but a knight, I was a very nauseous fellow.—Well, 'tis ten thousand pawnd well given, stap my vitals!—

Enter LA VEROLE.

La Ver. Me lord, de shoemaker, de tailor, de hosier, de semstress, de barber, be all ready, if your lordship please to dress.

Lord Fop. 'Tis well, admit 'em.

La Ver. Hey, messieurs, entrez.

Enter Tailor, Shoemaker, MENDLEGS, FORETOP, and MRS. CALICO.

Lord Fop. So, gentlemen, I hope you have all taken pains to show yourselves masters in your professions.

Tailor. I think I may presume to say, sir—

La Ver. My lord—you clawn, you!

Tailor. Why, is he made a lord?—My lord, I ask your lordship's pardon, my lord; I hope, my lord, your lordship will please to own I have brought your lordship as accomplished a suit of clothes as ever peer of England trod the stage in, my lord. Will your lordship please to try 'em now?

Lord Fop. Ay; but let my people dispose the glasses so that I may see myself before and behind, for I love to see myself all round.

Whilst he puts on his clothes, TOM FASHION and LORY enter and converse apart.

Fash. Heyday, what the devil have we here? Sure my gentleman's grown a favourite at court, he has got so many people at his levee.

Lory. Sir, these people come in order to make him a favourite at court; they are to establish him with the ladies.

Fash. Good God! to what an ebb of taste are women fallen, that it should be in the power of a laced coat to recommend a gallant to 'em!

Lory. Sir, tailors and periwig-makers are now become the bawds of the nation; 'tis they debauch all the women.

Fash. Thou sayest true; for there's that fop now has not by nature wherewithal to move a cook-maid, and by that time these fellows have done with him, egad he shall melt down a countess!—But now for my reception; I'll engage it shall be as cold a one as a courtier's to his friend, who comes to put him in mind of his promise.

Lord Fop. [*To his Tailor.*] Death and eternal tortures!—Sir, I say the packet's too high by a foot.

Tailor. My lord, if it had been an inch lower, it would not have held your lordship's pocket-handkerchief.

Lord Fop. Rat my pocket-handkerchief! have not I a page to carry it? You may make him a packet up to his chin a purpose for it; but I will not have mine come so near my face.

Tailor. 'Tis not for me to dispute your lordship's fancy.

Fash. [*To LORY.*] His lordship! Lory, did you observe that?

Lory. Yes, sir; I always thought 'twould end there. Now, I hope, you'll have a little more respect for him.

Fash. Respect!—Damn him for a coxcomb!

now has he ruined his estate to buy a title, that he may be a fool of the first rate;—but let's accost him.—[*To Lord Foppington.*] Brother. I'm your humble servant.

Lord Fop. O Lard, Tam! I did not expect you in England.—Brother, I am glad to see you.—[*Turning to his Tailor.*] Look you, sir; I shall never be reconciled to this nauseous packet; therefore pray get me another suit, with all manner of expedition, for this is my eternal aversion.—Mrs. Calico, are not you of my mind?

Mrs. Cal. O, directly, my lord! it can never be too low.

Lord Fop. You are passively in the right on't, for the packet becomes no part of the body but the knee. [*Exit Tailor.*]

Mrs. Cal. I hope your lordship is pleased with your steenkirk.

Lord Fop. In love with it, stap my vitals!—Bring your bill, you shall be paid to-morrow.

Mrs. Cal. I humbly thank your honour. [*Exit.*]

Lord Fop. Hark thee, shoemaker! these shoes an't ugly, but they don't fit me.

Shoemaker. My lord, my thinks they fit you very well.

Lord Fop. They hurt me just below the instep.

Shoe. [*Feeling his foot.*] My lord, they don't hurt you there.

Lord Fop. I tell thee, they pinch me execrably.

Shoe. My lord, if they pinch you, I'll be bound to be hanged, that's all.

Lord Fop. Why, wilt thou undertake to persuade me I cannot feel?

Shoe. Your lordship may please to feel what you think fit; but that shoe does not hurt you—I think I understand my trade.

Lord Fop. Now by all that's great and powerful, thou art an incomprehensible coxcomb! but thou makest good shoes, and so I'll bear with thee.

Shoe. My lord, I have worked for half the people of quality in town these twenty years; and 'twere very hard I should not know when a shoe hurts. and when it don't.

Lord Fop. Well, prithee be gone about thy business.—[*Exit Shoemaker.*] Mr. Mendlegs, a word with you: the calves of these stockings are thickened a little too much. They make my legs look like a chairman's—

Mend. My lord, my thinks they look mighty well.

Lord Fop. Ay, but you are not so good a judge of those things as I am, I have studied 'em all my life; therefore pray let the next be the thickness of a crown-piece less.—[*Aside.*] If the town takes notice my legs are fallen away, 'twill be attributed to the violence of some new intrigue.—[*Exit MENDLEGS.*] Come, Mr. Foretop, let me see what you have done, and then the fatigue of the morning will be over.

Fore. My lord, I have done what I defy any prince in Europe to outdo; I have made you a periwig so long, and so full of hair, it will serve you for a hat and cloak in all weathers.

Lord Fop. Then thou hast made me thy friend to eternity. Come, comb it out.

Fash. [*Aside to LORY.*] Well, Lory, what dost think on't? A very friendly reception from a brother after three years' absence!

Lory. Why, sir, 'tis your own fault; we seldom care for those that don't love what we love: if you would creep into his heart, you must enter

into his pleasures.—Here you have stood ever since you came in, and have not commended any one thing that belongs to him.

Fash. Nor never shall, while they belong to a coxcomb.

Lory. Then, sir, you must be content to pick a hungry bone.

Fash. No, sir, I'll crack it, and get to the marrow before I have done.

Lord Fop. Gad's curse, Mr. Foretop! you don't intend to put this upon me for a full periwig?

Fore. Not a full one, my lord? I don't know what your lordship may please to call a full one, but I have crammed twenty ounces of hair into it.

Lord Fop. What it may be by weight, sir, I shall not dispute; but by tale, there are not nine hairs of a side.

Fore. O lord! O lord! Why, as Gad shall judge me, your honour's side-face is reduced to the tip of your nose!

Lord Fop. My side-face may be in an eclipse for aught I know; but I'm sure my full-face is like the full-moon.

Fore. Heaven bless my eye-sight—[*Rubbing his eyes.*] Sure I look through the wrong end of the perspective; for by my faith, an't please your honour, the broadest place I see in your face does not seem to me to be two inches diameter.

Lord Fop. If it did it would just be two inches too broad; for a periwig to a man should be like a mask to a woman, nothing should be seen but his eyes.

Fore. My lord, I have done; if you please to have more hair in your wig, I'll put it in.

Lord Fop. Passively, yes.

Fore. Shall I take it back now, my lord?

Lord Fop. No: I'll wear it to-day, though it show such a manstrous pair of cheeks, stap my vitals, I shall be taken for a trumpeter!

[*Exit FORETOP.*]

Fash. Now your people of business are gone, brother, I hope I may obtain a quarter of an hour's audience of you.

Lord Fop. Faith, Tam, I must beg you'll excuse me at this time, for I must away to the House of Lords immediately; my lady Teaser's case is to come on to-day, and I would not be absent for the salvation of mankind.—Hey, page!

Enter Page.

Is the coach at the door?

Page. Yes, my lord.

Lord Fop. You'll excuse me, brother. [*Going.*]

Fash. Shall you be back at dinner?

Lord Fop. As Gad shall judge me, I can't tell; for 'tis possible I may dine with some of our House at Lacket's.

Fash. Shall I meet you there? For I must needs talk with you.

Lord Fop. That I'm afraid mayn't be so praper; far the lards I commonly eat with, are people of a nice conversation; and you know, Tam, your education has been a little at large: but, if you'll stay here, you'll find a family dinner.—[*To Page.*] Hey, fellow! What is there for dinner? There's beef: I suppose my brother will eat beef.—Dear Tam, I'm glad to see thee in England, stap my vitals!

[*Exit with LA VEROLE and Page.*]

Fash. Hell and furies! is this to be borne?

Lory. Faith, sir, I could almost have given him a knock o'th' pate myself.

Fash. 'Tis enough; I will now show thee the excess of my passion by being very calm. Come, Lory, lay your loggerhead to mine, and in cool blood let us contrive his destruction.

Lory. Here comes a head, sir, would contrive it better than us both, if he would but join in the confederacy.

Enter COUPLER.

Fash. By this light, old Coupler alive still!—Why, how now, matchmaker, art thou here still to plague the world with matrimony? You old bawd, how have you the impudence to be hobbling out of your grave twenty years after you are rotten!

Coup. When you begin to rot, sirrah, you'll go off like a pippin; one winter will send you to the devil. What mischief brings you home again? Ha! you young lascivious rogue you. Let me put my hand into your bosom, sirrah.

Fash. Stand off, old Sodom!

Coup. Nay, prithee now, don't be so coy.

Fash. Keep your hands to yourself, you old dog you, or I'll wring your nose off.

Coup. Hast thou then been a year in Italy, and brought home a fool at last? By my conscience, the young fellows of this age profit no more by their going abroad than they do by their going to church. Sirrah, sirrah, if you are not hanged before you come to my years,—you'll know a cock from a hen. But, come, I'm still a friend to thy person, though I have a contempt of thy understanding; and therefore I would willingly know thy condition, that I may see whether thou standest in need of my assistance: for widows swarm, my boy, the town's infected with 'em.

Fash. I stand in need of anybody's assistance, that will help me to cut my elder brother's throat, without the risk of being hanged for him.

Coup. Egad, sirrah, I could help thee to do him almost as good a turn, without the danger of being burned in the hand for't.

Fash. Sayest thou so, old Satan? Show me but that, and my soul is thine.

Coup. Pox o'thy soul! give me thy warm body, sirrah; I shall have a substantial title to't when I tell thee my project.

Fash. Out with it then, dear dad, and take possession as soon as thou wilt.

Coup. Sayest thou so, my Hephestion? Why, then, thus lies the scene—But hold; who's that? if we are heard we are undone.

Fash. What, have you forgot, Lory?

Coup. Who, trusty Lory, is it thee?

Lory. At your service, sir.

Coup. Give me thy hand, old boy. Egad, I did not know thee again; but I remember thy honesty though I did not thy face; I think thou hadst like to have been hanged once or twice for thy master.

Lory. Sir, I was very near once having that honour.

Coup. Well, live and hope; don't be discouraged; eat with him, and drink with him, and do what he bids thee, and it may be thy reward at last, as well as another's.—[*To TOM FASHION.*] Well, sir, you must know I have done you the kindness to make up a match for your brother.

Fash. Sir, I am very much beholden to you truly!

Coup. You may be, sirrah, before the wedding-day yet. The lady is a great heiress; fifteen

hundred pound a year, and a great bag of money; the match is concluded, the writings are drawn, and the pipkin's to be cracked in a fortnight. Now you must know, stripling (with respect to your mother), your brother's the son of a whore.

Fash. Good!

Coup. He has given me a bond of a thousand pounds for helping him to this fortune, and has promised me as much more in ready money upon the day of marriage, which, I understand by a friend, he ne'er designs to pay me. If therefore you will be a generous young dog, and secure me five thousand pounds, I'll be a covetous old rogue, and help you to the lady.

Fash. Egad, if thou canst bring this about, I'll have thy statue cast in brass. But don't you dote, you old pander you, when you talk at this rate?

Coup. That your youthful parts shall judge of. This plump partridge, that I tell you of, lives in the country, fifty miles off, with her honoured parents, in a lonely old house which nobody comes near; she never goes abroad, nor sees company at home. To prevent all misfortunes, she has her breeding within doors; the parson of the parish teaches her to play on the bass-viol, the clerk to sing, her nurse to dress, and her father to dance. In short, nobody can give you admittance there but I; nor can I do it any other way than by making you pass for your brother.

Fash. And how the devil wilt thou do that?

Coup. Without the devil's aid, I warrant thee. Thy brother's face not one of the family ever saw, the whole business has been managed by me, and all the letters go through my hands. The last that was writ to Sir Tunbelly Clumsey (for that's the old gentleman's name), was to tell him, his lordship would be down in a fortnight to consummate. Now, you shall go away immediately, pretend you writ that letter only to have the romantic pleasure of surprising your mistress; fall desperately in love, as soon as you see her; make that your plea for marrying her immediately, and, when the fatigue of the wedding-night's over, you shall send me a swinging purse of gold, you dog you.

Fash. Egad, old dad, I'll put my hand in thy bosom now.

Coup. Ah, you young hot lusty thief, let me muzzle you!—[*Kisses him.*] Sirrah, let me muzzle you.

Fash. [*Aside.*] Psha, the old lecher!

Coup. Well; I'll warrant thou hast not a far-

thing of money in thy pocket now; no, one may see it in thy face.

Fash. Not a souse, by Jupiter!

Coup. Must I advance then?—Well, sirrah, be at my lodgings in half an hour, and I'll see what may be done; we'll sign, and seal, and eat a pullet, and when I have given thee some farther instructions, thou shalt hoist sail and be gone.—[*Kisses him.*] T'other buss, and so adieu.

Fash. Um! psha!

Coup. Ah, you young warm dog you, what a delicious night will the bride have on't! [*Exit.*]

Fash. So, Lory; Providence, thou seest at last, takes care of men of merit: we are in a fair way to be great people.

Lory. Ay, sir, if the devil don't step between the cup and the lip, as he uses to do.

Fash. Why, faith, he has played me many a damned trick to spoil my fortune, and egad I'm almost afraid he's at work about it again now; but if I should tell thee how, thou'dst wonder at me.

Lory. Indeed, sir, I should not.

Fash. How dost know?

Lory. Because, sir, I have wondered at you so often, I can wonder at you no more.

Fash. No! what wouldst thou say if a qualm of conscience should spoil my design?

Lory. I would eat my words, and wonder more than ever.

Fash. Why, faith, Lory, though I am a young rake-hell, and have played many a roguish trick; this is so full-grown a cheat, I find I must take pains to come up to't, I have scruples—

Lory. They are strong symptoms of death; if you find they increase, pray, sir, make your will.

Fash. No, my conscience shan't starve me neither. But thus far I'll hearken to it; before I execute this project, I'll try my brother to the bottom, I'll speak to him with the temper of a philosopher; my reasons (though they press him home) shall yet be clothed with so much modesty, not one of all the truths they urge shall be so naked to offend his sight. If he has yet so much humanity about him as to assist me (though with a moderate aid), I'll drop my project at his feet, and show him how I can do for him much more than what I ask he'd do for me. This one conclusive trial of him I resolve to make—

Succeed or no, still victory's my lot;

If I subdue his heart, 'tis well; if not,

I shall subdue my conscience to my plot.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT II.

SCENE I.—A Room in LOVELESS'S Town-House.

Enter LOVELESS and AMANDA.

Love. How do you like these lodgings, my dear? For my part, I am so well pleased with them, I shall hardly remove whilst we stay in town, if you are satisfied.

Aman. I am satisfied with everything that pleases you, else I had not come to town at all.

Love. Oh! a little of the noise and bustle of the world sweetens the pleasures of retreat. We shall

find the charms of our retirement doubled, when we return to it.

Aman. That pleasing prospect will be my chiefest entertainment, whilst (much against my will) I am obliged to stand surrounded with these empty pleasures, which 'tis so much the fashion to be fond of.

Love. I own most of them are indeed but empty; nay, so empty, that one would wonder by what magic power they act, when they induce us to be vicious for their sakes. Yet some there are we may speak kindlier of. There are delights (of

which a private life is destitute) which may divert an honest man, and be a harmless entertainment to a virtuous woman. The conversation of the town is one; and truly (with some small allowances), the plays, I think, may be esteemed another.

Aman. The plays, I must confess, have some small charms; and would have more, would they restrain that loose obscene encouragement to vice, which shocks, if not the virtue of some women, at least the modesty of all.

Love. But till that reformation can be made, I would not leave the wholesome corn for some intruding tares that grow amongst us. Doubtless the moral of a well-wrought scene is of prevailing force.—Last night there happened one that moved me strangely.

Aman. Pray, what was that?

Love. Why 'twas about—but 'tis not worth repeating.

Aman. Yes, pray let me know it.

Love. No; I think 'tis as well let alone.

Aman. Nay, now you make me have a mind to know.

Love. 'Twas a foolish thing. You'd perhaps grow jealous should I tell it you, though without a cause, Heaven knows.

Aman. I shall begin to think I have cause, if you persist in making it a secret.

Love. I'll then convince you you have none, by making it no longer so. Know then, I happened in the play to find my very character, only with the addition of a relapse; which struck me so, I put a sudden stop to a most harmless entertainment, which till then diverted me between the acts. 'Twas to admire the workmanship of nature, in the face of a young lady that sat some distance from me, she was so exquisitely handsome!—

Aman. So exquisitely handsome!

Love. Why do you repeat my words, my dear?

Aman. Because you seemed to speak them with such pleasure, I thought I might oblige you with their echo.

Love. Then you are alarmed, Amanda?

Aman. It is my duty to be so, when you are in danger.

Love. You are too quick in apprehending for me; all will be well when you have heard me out. I do confess I gazed upon her, nay, eagerly I gazed upon her.

Aman. Eagerly! that's with desire.

Love. No, I desired her not: I viewed her with a world of admiration, but not one glance of love.

Aman. Take heed of trusting to such nice distinctions.

Love. I did take heed; for observing in the play, that he who seemed to represent me there was, by an accident like this, unwarily surprised into a net, in which he lay a poor entangled slave, and brought a train of mischiefs on his head, I snatched my eyes away; they pleaded hard for leave to look again, but I grew absolute, and they obeyed.

Aman. Were they the only things that were inquisitive? Had I been in your place, my tongue, I fancy, had been curious too; I should have asked her name, and where she lived (yet still without design:)—Who was she, pray?

Love. Indeed I cannot tell.

Aman. You will not tell.

Love. By all that's sacred then, I did not ask.

Aman. Nor do you know what company was with her?

Love. I do not.

Aman. Then I am calm again.

Love. Why were you disturbed?

Aman. Had I then no cause?

Love. None, certainly.

Aman. I thought I had.

Love. But you thought wrong, Amanda: for turn the case, and let it be your story; should you come home, and tell me you had seen a handsome man, should I grow jealous because you had eyes?

Aman. But should I tell you he were exquisitely so; that I had gazed on him with admiration; that I had looked with eager eyes upon him; should you not think 'twere possible I might go one step further, and inquire his name?

Love. [*Aside.*] She has reason on her side, I have talked too much; but I must turn it off another way.—[*Aloud.*] Will you then make no difference, Amanda, between the language of our sex and yours? There is a modesty restrains your tongues, which makes you speak by halves when you commend; but roving flattery gives a loose to ours, which makes us still speak double what we think. You should not, therefore, in so strict a sense, take what I said to her advantage.

Aman. Those flights of flattery, sir, are to our faces only: when women once are out of hearing, you are as modest in your commendations as we are. But I shan't put you to the trouble of farther excuses, if you please this business shall rest here. Only give me leave to wish, both for your peace and mine, that you may never meet this miracle of beauty more.

Love. I am content.

Enter Servant.

Ser. Madam, there's a young lady at the door in a chair, desires to know whether your ladyship sees company. I think her name is Berinthia.

Aman. O dear! 'tis a relation I have not seen this five years. Pray her to walk in.—[*Exit Servant.*] Here's another beauty for you. She was young when I saw her last; but I hear she's grown extremely handsome.

Love. Don't you be jealous now; for I shall gaze upon her too.

Enter BERINTHIA.

—Ha! by Heavens the very woman! [*Aside.*

Ber. [*Saluting AMANDA.*] Dear Amanda, I did not expect to meet with you in town.

Aman. Sweet cousin, I'm overjoyed to see you.—Mr. Loveless, here's a relation and a friend of mine, I desire you'll be better acquainted with.

Love. [*Saluting BERINTHIA.*] If my wife never desires a harder thing, madam, her request will be easily granted.

Ber. I think, madam, I ought to wish you joy.

Aman. Joy! Upon what?

Ber. Upon your marriage: you were a widow when I saw you last.

Love. You ought rather, madam, to wish me joy upon that, since I am the only gainer.

Ber. If she has got so good a husband as the world reports, she has gained enough to expect the compliments of her friends upon it.

Love. If the world is so favourable to me, to allow I deserve that title, I hope 'tis so just to my wife to own I derive it from her.

Ber. Sir, it is so just to you both, to own you are (and deserve to be) the happiest pair that live in it.

Love. I'm afraid we shall lose that character, madam, whenever you happen to change your condition.

Re-enter Servant.

Ser. Sir, my lord Foppington presents his humble service to you, and desires to know how you do. He but just now heard you were in town. He's at the next door; and if it be not inconvenient, he'll come and wait upon you.

Love. Lord Foppington!—I know him not.

Ber. Not his dignity, perhaps, but you do his person. 'Tis sir Novelty; he has bought a barony, in order to marry a great fortune. His patent has not been passed above eight-and-forty hours, and he has already sent how-do-ye's to all the town, to make 'em acquainted with his title.

Love. Give my service to his lordship, and let him know I am proud of the honour he intends me.—*[Exit Servant.]* Sure this addition of quality must have so improved his coxcomb, he can't but be very good company for a quarter of an hour.

Aman. Now it moves my pity more than my mirth, to see a man whom nature has made no fool, be so very industrious to pass for an ass.

Love. No, there you are wrong, Amanda; you should never bestow your pity upon those who take pains for your contempt. Pity those whom nature abuses, but never those who abuse nature.

Ber. Besides, the town would be robbed of one of its chiefest diversions, if it should become a crime to laugh at a fool.

Aman. I could never yet perceive the town inclined to part with any of its diversions, for the sake of their being crimes; but I have seen it very fond of some I think had little else to recommend 'em.

Ber. I doubt, Amanda, you are grown its enemy, you speak with so much warmth against it.

Aman. I must confess I am not much its friend.

Ber. Then give me leave to make you mine, by not engaging in its quarrel.

Aman. You have many stronger claims than that, Berinthia, whenever you think fit to plead your title.

Love. You have done well to engage a second, my dear; for here comes one will be apt to call you to an account for your country principles.

Enter Lord Foppington.

Lord Fop. Sir, I am your most humble servant.

Love. I wish you joy, my lord.

Lord Fop. O Lard, sir!—Madam, your ladyship's welcome to tawn.

Aman. I wish your lordship joy.

Lord Fop. O Heavens, madam—

Love. My lord, this young lady is a relation of my wife's.

Lord Fop. *[Saluting BERINTHIA.]* The beautifullest race of people upon earth, rat me! Dear Loveless, I am overjoyed to see you have brought your family to tawn again; I am, staph my vitals! *[Aside.]* For I design to lie with your wife.—*[To AMANDA.]* Far Gad's sake, madam, haw has your ladyship been able to subsist thus long, under the fatigue of a country life?

Aman. My life has been very far from that, my lord; it has been a very quiet one.

Lord Fop. Why, that's the fatigue I speak of, madam. For 'tis impossible to be quiet without thinking; now thinking is to me the greatest fatigue in the world.

Aman. Does not your lordship love reading then?

Lord Fop. Oh, passionately, madam.—But I never think of what I read.

Ber. Why, can your loraship read without thinking?

Lord Fop. O Lard!—can your ladyship pray without devotion, madam?

Aman. Well, I must own I think books the best entertainment in the world.

Lord Fop. I am so much of your ladyship's mind, madam, that I have a private gallery, where I walk sometimes, is furnished with nothing but books and looking-glasses. Madam, I have gilded 'em, and ranged 'em, so prettily, before Gad, it is the most entertaining thing in the world to walk and look upon 'em.

Aman. Nay, I love a neat library too; but 'tis, I think, the inside of a book should recommend it most to us.

Lord Fop. That, I must confess, I am not altogether so fand of. Far to mind the inside of a book, is to entertain one's self with the forced product of another man's brain. Naw I think a man of quality and breeding may be much better diverted with the natural sprouts of his own. But to say the truth, madam, let a man love reading never so well, when once he comes to know this tawn, he finds so many better ways of passing away the four-and-twenty hours, that 'twere ten thousand pities he should consume his time in that. Far example, madam, my life; my life, madam, is a perpetual stream of pleasure, that glides through such a variety of entertainments, I believe the wisest of our ancestors never had the least conception of any of 'em. I rise, madam, about ten a-clack. I don't rise sooner, because 'tis the worst thing in the world for the complexion; nat that I pretend to be a beau; but a man must endeavour to look wholesome, lest he make so nauseous a figure in the side-bax, the ladies should be compelled to turn their eyes upon the play. So at ten a-clack, I say, I rise. Naw, if I find it a good day, I resolve to take a turn in the Park, and see the fine women; so huddle on my clothes, and get dressed by one. If it be nasty weather, I take a turn in the chocolate-house: where as you walk, madam, you have the prettiest prospect in the world; you have looking-glasses all round you.—But I'm afraid I tire the company.

Ber. Not at all. Pray go on.

Lord Fop. Why then, ladies, from thence I go to dinner at Lacket's, where you are so nicely and delicately served, that, staph my vitals! they shall compose you a dish no bigger than a saucer, shall come to fifty shillings. Between eating my dinner (and washing my mouth, ladies) I spend my time, till I go to the play; where, till nine a-clack, I entertain myself with looking upon the company; and usually dispose of one hour more in leading them aut. So there's twelve of the four-and-twenty pretty well over. The other twelve, madam, are disposed of in two articles: in the first four I toast myself drunk, and in t'other eight I sleep myself sober again. Thus, ladies, you see my life is an eternal raund O of delights.

Love. 'Tis a heavenly one, indeed.

Aman. But I thought, my lord, you beaux spent a great deal of your time in intrigues: you have given us no account of 'em yet.

Lord Fop. [*Aside.*] Soh; she would inquire into my amours—That's jealousy:—she begins to be in love with me.—[*To AMANDA*] Why, madam, as to time for my intrigues, I usually make detachments of it from my other pleasures, according to the exigency. Far your ladyship may please to take notice, that those who intrigue with women of quality, have rarely occasion for above half an hour at a time: people of that rank being under those decorums, they can seldom give you a longer view than will just serve to shoot 'em flying. So that the course of my other pleasures is not very much interrupted by my amours.

Love. But your lordship is now become a pillar of the state; you must attend the weighty affairs of the nation.

Lord Fop. Sir,—as to weighty affairs—I leave them to weighty heads. I never intend mine shall be a burden to my body.

Love. O but you'll find the house will expect your attendance.

Lord Fop. Sir, you'll find the house will compound for my appearance.

Love. But your friends will take it ill if you don't attend their particular causes.

Lord Fop. Not, sir, if I come time enough to give 'em my particular vote.

Ber. But pray, my lord, how do you dispose of yourself on Sundays? for that, methinks, should hang wretchedly on your hands.

Lord Fop. Why faith, madam—Sunday—is a vile day, I must confess. I intend to move for leave to bring in a bill, that players may work upon it, as well as the hackney coaches. Though this I must say for the government, it leaves us the churches to entertain us.—But then again, they begin so abominable early, a man must rise by candle-light to get dressed by the psalm.

Ber. Pray which church does your lordship most oblige with your presence?

Lord Fop. Oh, St. James's, madam:—there's much the best company.

Aman. Is there good preaching too?

Lord Fop. Why faith, madam—I can't tell. A man must have very little to do there that can give an account of the sermon.

Ber. You can give us an account of the ladies at least.

Lord Fop. Or I deserve to be excommunicated.—There is my lady Tattle, my lady Prate, my lady Titter, my lady Leer, my lady Giggle, and my lady Grin. These sit in the front of the boxes, and all church-time are the prettiest company in the world, stap my vitals!—[*To AMANDA.*] Mayn't we hope for the honour to see your ladyship added to our society, madam?

Aman. Alas, my lord! I am the worst company in the world at church: I'm apt to mind the prayers, or the sermon, or—

Lord Fop. One is indeed strangely apt at church to mind what one should not do. But I hope, madam, at one time or other, I shall have the honour to lead your ladyship to your coach there.—[*Aside.*] Methinks she seems strangely pleased with everything I say to her.—'Tis a vast pleasure to receive encouragement from a woman before her husband's face.—I have a good mind to pursue my

conquest, and speak the thing plainly to her at once. Egad I'll do't, and that in so cavalier a manner, she shall be surprised at it.—[*Aloud.*] Ladies, I'll take my leave; I'm afraid I begin to grow troublesome with the length of my visit.

Aman. Your lordship's too entertaining to grow troublesome anywhere.

Lord Fop. [*Aside.*] That now was as much as if she had said—pray lie with me. I'll let her see I'm quick of apprehension.—[*To AMANDA.*] O Lord, madam! I had like to have forgot a secret, I must needs tell your ladyship.—[*To LOVELESS.*] Ned, you must not be so jealous now as to listen.

Love. Not I, my lord; I'm too fashionable a husband to pry into the secrets of my wife.

Lord Fop. [*To AMANDA, squeezing her hand.*] I am in love with you to desperation, strike me speechless!

Aman. [*Giving him a box on the ear.*] Then, thus I return your passion.—An impudent fool!

Lord Fop. Gads curse, madam, I'm a peer of the realm!

Love. Hey; what the devil do you affront my wife, sir? Nay then—

[*They draw and fight. The ladies run shrieking for help.*]

Aman. Ah! What has my folly done! Help! murder! help! part 'em for Heaven's sake.

Lord Fop. [*Falling back, and leaning upon his sword.*] Ah—quite through the body!—stap my vitals!

Enter Servants.

Love. [*Running to him.*] I hope I han't killed the fool however.—Bear him up.—Where's your wound?

Lord Fop. Just through the guts.

Love. Call a surgeon there.—Unbutton him quickly.

Lord Fop. Ay, pray make haste. [*Exit Servant.*]

Love. This mischief you may thank yourself for.

Lord Fop. I may so—love's the devil indeed, Ned.

Re-enter Servant with SYRINGE.

Ser. Here's Mr. Syringe, sir, was just going by the door.

Lord Fop. He's the welcomest man alive.

Syr. Stand by, stand by, stand by! Pray, gentlemen, stand by. Lord have mercy upon us! did you never see a man run through the body before? pray, stand by.

Lord Fop. Ah, Mr. Syringe—I'm a dead man! *Syr.* A dead man and I by!—I should laugh to see that, egad!

Love. Prithee don't stand prating, but look upon his wound.

Syr. Why, what if I won't look upon his wound this hour, sir?

Love. Why then he'll bleed to death, sir.

Syr. Why, then I'll fetch him to life again, sir.

Love. 'Slife, he's run through the guts, I tell thee.

Syr. Would he were run through the heart, I should get the more credit by his cure. Now I hope you are satisfied?—Come, now let me come at him; now let me come at him.—[*Viewing his wound.*] Oons, what a gash is here!—Why, sir, a man may drive a coach and six horses into your body

Lord Fop. Ho!

Syr. Why, what the devil, have you run the

gentleman through with a scythe?—[*Aside.*] A little prick between the skin and the ribs, that's all.

Love. Let me see his wound.

Syr. Then you shall dress it, sir; for if anybody looks upon it, I won't.

Love. Why, thou art the veriest coxcomb I ever saw.

Syr. Sir, I am not master of my trade for nothing.

Lord Fop. Surgeon!

Syr. Well, sir.

Lord Fop. Is there any hopes?

Syr. Hopes!—I can't tell.—What are you willing to give for your cure?

Lord Fop. Five hundred pounds with pleasure.

Syr. Why then perhaps there may be hopes. But we must avoid further delay.—Here; help the gentleman into a chair, and carry him to my house presently, that's the properest place—[*Aside.*] to bubble him out of his money.—[*Aloud.*] Come, a chair, a chair quickly—there, in with him.

[*They put him into a chair.*]

Lord Fop. Dear Loveless—adieu! If I die—I forgive thee; and if I live—I hope thou wilt do as much by me. I am very sorry you and I should quarrel; but I hope here's an end on't, for if you are satisfied—I am.

Love. I shall hardly think it worth my prosecuting any further, so you may be at rest, sir.

Lord Fop. Thou art a generous fellow, strike me dumb!—[*Aside.*] But thou hast an impertinent wife, stap my vitals!

Syr. So, carry him off! carry him off! we shall have him prate himself into a fever by-and-by; carry him off. [*Exit with Lord Foppington.*]

Aman. Now on my knees, my dear, let me ask your pardon for my indiscretion, my own I never shall obtain.

Love. Oh, there's no harm done: you served him well.

Aman. He did indeed deserve it. But I tremble to think how dear my indiscreet resentment might have cost you.

Love. Oh, no matter, never trouble yourself about that.

Ber. For Heaven's sake, what was't he did to you?

Aman. O nothing; he only squeezed me kindly by the hand, and frankly offered me a coxcomb's heart. I know I was to blame to resent it as I did, since nothing but a quarrel could ensue. But the fool so surprised me with his insolence, I was not mistress of my fingers.

Ber. Now, I dare swear, he thinks you had 'em at great command, they obeyed you so readily.

Enter WORTHY.

Wor. Save you, save you, good people: I'm glad to find you all alive; I met a wounded peer carrying off. For Heaven's sake, what was the matter.

Love. Oh, a trifle! He would have lain with my wife before my face, so she obliged him with a box o'th' ear, and I run him through the body: that was all.

Wor. Bagatelle on all sides. But, pray madam, how long has this noble lord been a humble servant of yours?

Aman. This is the first I have heard on't. So, I suppose, 'tis his quality more than his love has

brought him into this adventure. He thinks his title an authentic passport to every woman's heart below the degree of a peeress.

Wor. He's coxcomb enough to think anything. But I would not have you brought into trouble for him: I hope there's no danger of his life?

Love. None at all. He's fallen into the hands of a roguish surgeon, who I perceive designs to frighten a little money out of him. But I saw his wound, 'tis nothing; he may go to the play to-night, if he pleases.

Wor. I am glad you have corrected him without farther mischief. And now, sir, if these ladies have no farther service for you, you'll oblige me if you can go to the place I spoke to you of t'other day.

Love. With all my heart.—[*Aside.*] Though I could wish, methinks, to stay and gaze a little longer on that creature. Good gods, how beautiful she is!—But what have I to do with beauty? I have already had my portion, and must not covet more.—[*Aloud.*] Come, sir, when you please.

Wor. Ladies, your servant.

Aman. Mr. Loveless, pray one word with you before you go.

Love. [To WORTHY.] I'll overtake you, sir.—[*Exit WORTHY.*] What would my dear?

Aman. Only a woman's foolish question,—how do you like my cousin here?

Love. Jealous already, Amanda?

Aman. Not at all, I ask you for another reason.

Love. [Aside.] Whate'er her reason be, I must not tell her true.—[To AMANDA.] Why, I confess she's handsome. But you must not think I slight your kinswoman, if I own to you, of all the women who may claim that character, she is the last would triumph in my heart.

Aman. I'm satisfied.

Love. Now tell me why you asked?

Aman. At night I will. Adieu.

Love. I'm yours.

[*Kisses her and exit.*]

Aman. [Aside.] I'm glad to find he does not like her; for I have a great mind to persuade her to come and live with me.—[Aloud.] Now, dear Berinthia, let me inquire a little into your affairs: for I do assure you I am enough your friend to interest myself in everything that concerns you.

Ber. You formerly have given me such proofs on't I should be very much to blame to doubt it; I am sorry I have no secrets to trust you with, that I might convince you how entire a confidence I durst repose in you.

Aman. Why, is it possible that one so young and beautiful as you should live and have no secrets.

Ber. What secrets do you mean?

Aman. Lovers.

Ber. Oh, twenty! but not one secret one amongst 'em. Lovers in this age have too much honour to do anything underhand; they do all aboveboard.

Aman. That now, methinks, would make me hate a man.

Ber. But the women of the town are of another mind: for by this means a lady may (with the expense of a few coquette glances) lead twenty fools about in a string for two or three years together. Whereas, if she should allow 'em greater favours, and oblige 'em to secrecy, she would not keep one of 'em a fortnight.

Aman. There's something indeed in that to

satisfy the vanity of a woman, but I can't comprehend how the men find their account in it.

Ber. Their entertainment, I must confess, is a riddle to me. For there's very few of them ever get farther than a bow and an ogle. I have half a score for my share, who follow me all over the town; and at the play, the Park, and the church, do (with their eyes) say the violentest things to me.—But I never hear any more of 'em.

Aman. What can be the reason of that?

Ber. One reason is, they don't know how to go farther. They have had so little practice, they don't understand the trade. But, besides their ignorance, you must know there is not one of my half score lovers but what follows half a score mistresses. Now, their affections being divided amongst so many, are not strong enough for any one to make 'em pursue her to the purpose. Like a young puppy in a warren, they have a flirt at all, and catch none.

Aman. Yet they seem to have a torrent of love to dispose of.

Ber. They have so. But 'tis like the river of a modern philosopher, (whose works, though a woman, I have read,) it sets out with a violent stream, splits in a thousand branches, and is all lost in the sands.

Aman. But do you think this river of love runs all its course without doing any mischief? Do you think it overflows nothing?

Ber. O yes; 'tis true, it never breaks into anybody's ground that has the least fence about it; but it overflows all the commons that lie in its way. And this is the utmost achievement of those dreadful champions in the field of love—the beaux.

Aman. But prithee, Berinthia, instruct me a little farther; for I am so great a novice I'm almost ashamed on't. My husband's leaving me whilst I was young and fond threw me into that depth of discontent, that ever since I have led so private and reclusive a life, my ignorance is scarce conceivable. I therefore fain would be instructed. Not (Heaven knows) that what you call intrigues have any charms for me; my love and principles are too well fixed. The practic part of all unlawful love is—

Ber. Oh, 'tis abominable! But for the speculative; that we must all confess is entertaining. The conversation of all the virtuous women in the town turns upon that and new clothes.

Aman. Pray be so just then to me to believe, 'tis with a world of innocency I would inquire, whether you think those women we call women of reputation, do really 'scape all other men, as they do those shadows of 'em, the beaux.

Ber. O no, Amanda; there are a sort of men make dreadful work amongst 'em: men that may be called the beaux antipathy; for they agree in nothing but walking upon two legs.—These have brains, the beau has none. These are in love with their mistress, the beau with himself. They take care of her reputation, he's industrious to destroy it. They are decent, he's a fop. They are sound, he's rotten. They are men, he's an ass.

Aman. If this be their character, I fancy we had here e'en now a pattern of 'em both.

Ber. His lordship and Mr. Worthy?

Aman. The same.

Ber. As for the lord, he's eminently so; and for the other, I can assure you, there's not a man

in town who has a better interest with the women, that are worth having an interest with. But 'tis all private: he's like a back-stair minister at court, who, whilst the reputed favourites are sauntering in the bedchamber, is ruling the roast in the closet.

Aman. He answers then the opinion I had ever of him. Heavens! What a difference there is between a man like him, and that vain nauseous fop, sir Novelty.—[*Taking her hand.*] I must acquaint you with a secret, cousin. 'Tis not that fool alone has talked to me of love, Worthy has been tampering too. 'Tis true, he has done it in vain: not all his charms or art have power to shake me. My love, my duty, and my virtue, are such faithful guards, I need not fear my heart should e'er betray me. But what I wonder at is this: I find I did not start at his proposal, as when it came from one whom I contemned. I therefore mention this attempt, that I may learn from you whence it proceeds; that vice (which cannot change its nature) should so far change at least its shape, as that the self-same crime proposed from one shall seem a monster gaping at your ruin; when from another it shall look so kind, as though it were your friend, and never meant to harm you. Whence, think you, can this difference proceed? For 'tis not love, Heaven knows.

Ber. O no; I would not for the world believe it were. But possibly, should there a dreadful sentence pass upon you, to undergo the rage of both their passions; the pain you apprehend from one might seem so trivial to the other, the danger would not quite so much alarm you.

Aman. Fy, fy, Berinthia! you would indeed alarm me, could you incline me to a thought, that all the merit of mankind combined could shake that tender love I bear my husband. No, he sits triumphant in my heart, and nothing can dethrone him.

Ber. But should he abdicate again, do you think you should preserve the vacant throne ten tedious winters more in hopes of his return?

Aman. Indeed I think I should. Though I confess, after those obligations he has to me, should he abandon me once more, my heart would grow extremely urgent with me to root him thence, and cast him out for ever.

Ber. Were I that thing they call a slighted wife, somebody should run the risk of being that thing they call—a husband.

Aman. O fy, Berinthia! no revenge should ever be taken against a husband. But to wrong his bed is a vengeance, which of all vengeance—

Ber. Is the sweetest, ha! ha! ha! Don't I talk madly?

Aman. Madly indeed.

Ber. Yet I'm very innocent.

Aman. That I dare swear you are. I know how to make allowances for your humour: you were always very entertaining company; but I find since marriage and widowhood have shown you the world a little, you are very much improved.

Ber. [*Aside.*] Alack a-day, there has gone more than that to improve me, if she knew all!

Aman. For Heaven's sake, Berinthia, tell me what way I shall take to persuade you to come and live with me?

Ber. Why, one way in the world there is—and but one.

Aman. Pray which is that?

Ber. It is to assure me—I shall be very welcome.

Aman. If that be all, you shall e'en lie here to-night.

Ber. To-night!

Aman. Yes, to-night.

Ber. Why, the people where I lodge will think me mad.

Aman. Let 'em think what they please.

Ber. Say you so, Amanda? Why then they shall think what they please: for I'm a young widow, and I care not what anybody thinks. Ah, Amanda, it's a delicious thing to be a young widow!

Aman. You'll hardly make me think so.

Ber. Phu! because you are in love with your husband: but that is not every woman's case.

Aman. I hope 'twas yours at least.

Ber. Mine, say ye? Now I have a great mind to tell you a lie, but I should do it so awkwardly you'd find me out.

Aman. Then e'en speak the truth.

Ber. Shall I?—Then after all I did love him, Amanda—as a nun does penance.

Aman. Why did not you refuse to marry him, then

Ber. Because my mother would have whipped me.

Aman. How did you live together?

Ber. Like man and wife, asunder.—He loved the country, I the town. He hawks and hounds, I coaches and equipage. He eating and drinking, I carding and playing. He the sound of a horn, I the squeak of a fiddle. We were dull company at table, worse a-bed. Whenever we met, we gave one another the spleen; and never agreed but once, which was about lying alone.

Aman. But tell me one thing truly and sincerely.

Ber. What's that?

Aman. Notwithstanding all these jars, did not his death at last extremely trouble you?

Ber. O yes. Not that my present pangs were

so very violent, but the after-pains were intolerable. I was forced to wear a beastly widow's band a twelvemonth for't.

Aman. Women, I find, have different inclinations.

Ber. Women, I find, keep different company. When your husband ran away from you, if you had fallen into some of my acquaintance, 'twould have saved you many a tear. But you go and live with a grandmother, a bishop, and an old nurse; which was enough to make any woman break her heart for her husband. Pray, Amanda, if ever you are a widow again, keep yourself so, as I do.

Aman. Why! do you then resolve you'll never marry?

Ber. O, no; I resolve I will.

Aman. How so?

Ber. That I never may.

Aman. You banter me.

Ber. Indeed I don't. But I consider I'm a woman, and form my resolutions accordingly.

Aman. Well, my opinion is, form what resolution you will, matrimony will be the end on't.

Ber. Faith it won't.

Aman. How do you know?

Ber. I am sure on't.

Aman. Why, do you think 'tis impossible for you to fall in love?

Ber. No.

Aman. Nay, but to grow so passionately fond, that nothing but the man you love can give you rest.

Ber. Well, what then?

Aman. Why then you'll marry him.

Ber. How do you know that?

Aman. Why, what can you do else?

Ber. Nothing—but sit and cry.

Aman. Psha!

Ber. Ah, poor Amanda! you have led a country life: but if you'll consult the widows of this town, they'll tell you, you should never take a lease of a house you can hire for a quarter's warning. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT III.

SCENE I.—A Room in Lord FOPPINGTON'S House.

Enter Lord FOPPINGTON and Servant.

Lord Fop. Hey, fellow, let the coach come to the door.

Ser. Will your lordship venture so soon to expose yourself to the weather?

Lord Fop. Sir, I will venture as soon as I can, to expose myself to the ladies; though give me my cloak, however; for in that side-box, what between the air that comes in at the door on one side, and the intolerable warmth of the masks on t'other, a man gets so many heats and colds, 'twould destroy the constitution of a horse.

Ser. [*Putting on his cloak.*] I wish your lordship would please to keep house a little longer; I'm afraid your honour does not well consider your wound.

Lord Fop. My wound!—I would not be in eclipse another day, though I had as many wounds in my guts as I have had in my heart. [*Exit Servant.*]

Enter TOM FASHION.

Fash. Brother, your servant. How do you find yourself to-day?

Lord Fop. So well, that I have ordered my coach to the door: so there's no great danger of death this baut, Tam.

Fash. I'm very glad of it.

Lord Fop. [*Aside.*] That I believe's a lie.— [*Aloud.*] Prithee, Tam, tell me one thing: did not your heart cut a caper up to your mauth, when you heard I was run through the body?

Fash. Why do you think it should?

Lord Fop. Because I remember mine did so, when I heard my father was shat through the head.

Fash. It then did very ill.

Lord Fop. Prithee, why so?

Fash. Because he used you very well.

Lord Fop. Well?—naw, strike me dumb! he starved me. He has let me want a thousand women for want of a thousand paund.

Fash. Then he hindered you from making a

great many ill bargains, for I think no woman is worth money that will take money.

Lord Fop. If I were a younger brother, I should think so too.

Fash. Why, is it possible you can value a woman that's to be bought?

Lord Fop. Prithee, why not as well as a pad-nag?

Fash. Because a woman has a heart to dispose of; a horse has none.

Lord Fop. Look you, Tam, of all things that belong to a woman, I have an aversion to her heart. Far when once a woman has given you her heart—you can never get rid of the rest of her body.

Fash. This is strange doctrine. But pray in your amours how is it with your own heart?

Lord Fop. Why, my heart in my amours—is like—my heart out of my amours; *à la glace*. My body, Tam, is a watch; and my heart is the pendulum to it; whilst the finger runs round to every hour in the circle, that still beats the same time.

Fash. Then you are seldom much in love?

Lord Fop. Never, stap my vitals!

Fash. Why then did you make all this bustle about Amanda?

Lord Fop. Because she was a woman of an insistent virtue, and I thought myself piqued in honour to debauch her.

Fash. Very well.—[*Aside.*] Here's a rare fellow for you, to have the spending of five thousand pounds a year! But now for my business with him.—[*Aloud.*] Brother, though I know to talk to you of business (especially of money) is a theme not quite so entertaining to you as that of the ladies; my necessities are such, I hope you'll have patience to hear me.

Lord Fop. The greatness of your necessities, Tam, is the worst argument in the world for your being patiently heard. I do believe you are going to make me a very good speech, but, strike me dumb! it has the worst beginning of any speech I have heard this twelvemonth.

Fash. I'm very sorry you think so.

Lord Fop. I do believe thou art. But come, let's know thy affair quickly; far 'tis a new play, and I shall be so rumpled and squeezed with pressing through the crowd, to get to my servant, the women will think I have lain all night in my clothes.

Fash. Why then (that I may not be the author of so great a misfortune) my case in a word is this. The necessary expenses of my travels have so much exceeded the wretched income of my annuity, that I have been forced to mortgage it for five hundred pounds, which is spent; so that unless you are so kind to assist me in redeeming it, I know no remedy but to take a purse.

Lord Fop. Why, faith, Tam—to give you my sense of the thing, I do think taking a purse the best remedy in the world: for if you succeed, you are relieved that way; if you are taken—you are relieved t'other.

Fash. I'm glad to see you are in so pleasant a humour, I hope I shall find the effects on't.

Lord Fop. Why, do you then really think it a reasonable thing I should give you five hundred pounds?

Fash. I do not ask it as a due, brother, I am willing to receive it as a favour.

Lord Fop. Thou art willing to receive it any how, strike me speechless! But these are damned times to give money in, taxes are so great, repairs so exorbitant, tenants such rogues, and periwigs so dear, that the devil take me, I am reduced to that extremity in my cash, I have been forced to retrench in that one article of sweet powder, till I have brought it down to five guineas a month. Now judge, Tam, whether I can spare you five hundred pounds.

Fash. If you can't I must starve, that's all.—[*Aside.*] Damn him!

Lord Fop. All I can say is, you should have been a better husband.

Fash. Oons, if you can't live upon five thousand a year, how do you think I should do't upon two hundred?

Lord Fop. Don't be in a passion, Tam, far passion is the most unbecoming thing in the world—to the face. Look you, I don't love to say anything to you to make you melancholy; but upon this occasion I must take leave to put you in mind, that a running horse does require more attendance than a coach-horse. Nature has made some difference 'twixt you and I.

Fash. Yes, she has made you older.—[*Aside.*] Pox take her!

Lord Fop. That is nat all, Tam.

Fash. Why, what is there else?

Lord Fop. [Looking first upon himself, then upon his brother.] Ask the ladies.

Fash. Why, thou essence-bottle! thou musk cat! dost thou then think thou hast any advantage over me, but what Fortune has given thee?

Lord Fop. I do—stap my vitals!

Fash. Now, by all that's great and powerful, thou art the prince of coxcombs!

Lord Fop. Sir—I am proud of being at the head of so prevailing a party.

Fash. Will nothing then provoke thee? Draw, coward!

Lord Fop. Look you, Tam, you know I have always taken you for a mighty dull fellow, and here is one of the foolishest plats broke out that I have seen a long time. Your poverty makes your life so burdensome to you, you would provoke me to a quarrel, in hopes either to slip through my lungs into my estate, or to get yourself run through the guts, to put an end to your pain. But I will disappoint you in both your designs; far, with the temper of a philosopher, and the discretion of a statesman—I will go to the play with my sword in my scabbard. [Exit.]

Fash. So! Farewell, snuff-box! and now, conscience, I defy thee.—Lory!

Enter LORY.

Lory. Sir!

Fash. Here's rare news, Lory; his lordship has given me a pill has purged off all my scruples.

Lory. Then my heart's at ease again. For I have been in a lamentable fright, sir, ever since your conscience had the impudence to intrude into your company.

Fash. Be at peace, it will come there no more; my brother has given it a wring by the nose, and I have kicked it down stairs. So run away to the inn; get the horses ready quickly, and bring 'em to old Coupler's, without a moment's delay.

Lory. Then, sir, you are going straight about the fortune?

Fash. I am. Away! fly, Lory!

Lory. The happiest day I ever saw. I'm upon the wing already. *[Exit severally.]*

SCENE II.—*A Garden adjoining LOVELESS'S Lodgings.*

Enter LOVELESS and Servant.

Love. Is my wife within?

Ser. No, sir, she has been gone out this half hour.

Love. 'Tis well, leave me. *[Exit Servant.]*

Sure fate has yet some business to be done,
Before Amanda's heart and mine must rest;
Else, why amongst those legions of her sex,
Which throng the world,
Should she pick out for her companion
The only one on earth

Whom nature has endow'd for her undoing?

Undoing, was't, I said!—who shall undo her?

Is not her empire fix'd? am I not hers?

Did she not rescue me, a grovelling slave,

When chain'd and bound by that black tyrant vice,

I labour'd in his vilest drudgery?

Did she not ransom me, and set me free?

Nay more: when by my follies sunk

To a poor tatter'd despicable beggar,

Did she not lift me up to envied fortune!

Give me herself, and all that she possess'd?

Without a thought of more return,

Than what a poor repenting heart might make her.

Han't she done this? And if she has,

Am I not strongly bound to love her for it?

To love her!—why do I not love her then?

By earth and heaven I do!

Nay, I have demonstration that I do:

For I would sacrifice my life to serve her.

Yet hold—if laying down my life

Be demonstration of my love,

What is't I feel in favour of Berinthia?

For should she be in danger, methinks I could
incline to risk it for her service too; and yet I
do not love her. How then subsists my proof?—

Oh, I have found it out! What I would do for
one, is demonstration of my love; and if I'd do as
much for t'other: it there is demonstration of my
friendship.—Ay—it must be so. I find I'm very
much her friend. Yet let me ask myself one puzz-
ling question more: Whence springs this mighty
friendship all at once? For our acquaintance is of
later date. Now friendship's said to be a plant of
tedious growth, its root composed of tender fibres,
nice in their taste, cautious in spreading,
Check'd with the least corruption in the soil;
Long ere it take,

And longer still ere it appear to do so:

Whilst mine is in a moment shot so high,

And fix'd so fast,

It seems beyond the power of storms to shake it.

I doubt it thrives too fast. *[Musing.]*

Enter BERINTHIA.

Ah, she here!—Nay, then take heed my heart,
for there are dangers towards.

Ber. What makes you look so thoughtful, sir?
I hope you are not ill.

Love. I was debating, madam, whether I was
so or not; and that was it which made me look
so thoughtful.

Ber. Is it then so hard a matter to decide? I
thought all people had been acquainted with their
own bodies, though few people know their own
minds.

Love. What if the distemper, I suspect, be in
the mind?

Ber. Why then I'll undertake to prescribe you
a cure.

Love. Alas! you undertake you know not what.

Ber. So far at least then allow me to be a
physician.

Love. Nay, I'll allow you so yet further: for I
have reason to believe, should I put myself into
your hands, you would increase my distemper.

Ber. Perhaps I might have reasons from the
college not to be too quick in your cure; but 'tis
possible I might find ways to give you often ease,
sir.

Love. Were I but sure of that, I'd quickly lay
my case before you.

Ber. Whether you are sure of it or no, what
risk do you run in trying?

Love. Oh! a very great one.

Ber. How?

Love. You might betray my distemper to my
wife.

Ber. And so lose all my practice.

Love. Will you then keep my secret?

Ber. I will, if it don't burst me.

Love. Swear.

Ber. I do.

Love. By what?

Ber. By woman.

Love. That's swearing by my deity. Do it by
your own, or I shan't believe you.

Ber. By man then.

Love. I'm satisfied. Now hear my symptoms,
and give me your advice. The first were these:
When 'twas my chance to see you at the play,
A random glance you threw at first alarm'd me,
I could not turn my eyes from whence the danger
came:

I gazed upon you till you shot again,

And then my fears came on me.

My heart began to pant, my limbs to tremble,

My blood grew thin, my pulse beat quick, my eyes

Grew hot and dim, and all the frame of nature

Shook with apprehension.

'Tis true, some small recruits of resolution

My manhood brought to my assistance;

And by their help I made a stand a while,

But found at last your arrows flew so thick,

They could not fail to pierce me; so left the field,

And fled for shelter to Amanda's arms.

What think you of these symptoms, pray?

Ber. Feverish every one of 'em.

But what relief pray did your wife afford you?

Love. Why, instantly she let me blood;

Which for the present much assuaged my flame.

But when I saw you, out it burst again,

And rag'd with greater fury than before.

Nay, since you now appear, 'tis so increased,

That in a moment, if you do not help me,

I shall, whilst you look on, consume to ashes.

[Takes hold of her hand.]

Ber. [*Breaking from him.*] O Lord, let me go? 'Tis the plague, and we shall all be infected.

Love. [*Catching her in his arms, and kissing her.*] Then we'll die together, my charming angel!

Ber. O Ged—the devil's in you!—Lord, let me go, here's somebody coming.

Enter Servant.

Ser. Sir, my lady's come home, and desires to speak with you: she's in her chamber.

Love. Tell her I'm coming.—[*Exit Servant.*] But before I go, one glass of nectar more to drink her health.

Ber. Stand off, or I shall hate you, by Heavens!

Love. [*Kissing her.*] In matters of love, a woman's oath is no more to be minded than a man's.

Ber. Um—

Enter WORTHY.

Wor. [*Aside.*] Ha! what's here? my old mistress, and so close, 'f faith! I would not spoil her sport for the universe. [*Exit.*

Ber. O Ged!—Now do I pray to Heaven,—[*Exit LOVELESS running*] with all my heart and soul, that the devil in hell may take me, if ever—I was better pleased in my life!—This man has bewitched me, that's certain.—[*Sighing.*] Well, I am condemned; but, thanks to Heaven, I feel myself each moment more and more prepared for my execution. Nay, to that degree, I don't perceive I have the least fear of dying. No, I find, let the executioner be but a man, and there's nothing will suffer with more resolution than a woman. Well, I never had but one intrigue yet—but I confess I long to have another. Pray Heaven it end as the first did though, that we may both grow weary at a time; for 'tis a melancholy thing for lovers to outlive one another.

Re-enter WORTHY.

Wor. [*Aside.*] This discovery's a lucky one, I hope to make a happy use on't. That gentlewoman there is no fool; so I shall be able to make her understand her interest.—[*Aloud.*] Your servant, madam; I need not ask you how you do, you have got so good a colour.

Ber. No better than I used to have, I suppose.

Wor. A little more blood in your cheeks.

Ber. The weather's hot.

Wor. If it were not, a woman may have a colour.

Ber. What do you mean by that?

Wor. Nothing.

Ber. Why do you smile then?

Wor. Because the weather's hot.

Ber. You'll never leave roguing, I see that.

Wor. [*Putting his finger to his nose.*] You'll never leave—I see that.

Ber. Well, I can't imagine what you drive at. Pray tell me what you mean?

Wor. Do you tell me; it's the same thing.

Ber. I can't.

Wor. Guess!

Ber. I shall guess wrong.

Wor. Indeed you won't.

Ber. Psha! either tell, or let it alone.

Wor. Nay, rather than let it alone, I will tell. But first I must put you in mind, that after what has passed 'twixt you and I, very few things ought to be secrets between us.

Ber. Why, what secrets do we hide? I know of none.

Wor. Yes, there are two; one I have hid from you, and t'other you would hide from me. You are fond of Loveless, which I have discovered; and I am fond of his wife—

Ber. Which I have discovered.

Wor. Very well, now I confess your discovery to be true: what do you say to mine?

Ber. Why, I confess—I would swear 'twere false, if I thought you were fool enough to believe me.

Wor. Now am I almost in love with you again. Nay, I don't know but I might be quite so, had I made one short campaign with Amanda. Therefore, if you find 'twould tickle your vanity to bring me down once more to your lure, e'en help me quickly to despatch her business, that I may have nothing else to do, but to apply myself to yours.

Ber. Do you then think, sir, I am old enough to be a bawd?

Wor. No, but I think you are wise enough to—

Ber. To do what?

Wor. To hoodwink Amanda with a gallant, that she mayn't see who is her husband's mistress.

Ber. [*Aside.*] He has reason: the hint's a good one.

Wor. Well, madam, what think you on't?

Ber. I think you are so much a deeper politician in these affairs than I am, that I ought to have a very great regard to your advice.

Wor. Then give me leave to put you in mind, that the most easy, safe, and pleasant situation for your own amour, is the house in which you now are, provided you keep Amanda from any sort of suspicion. That the way to do that, is to engage her in an intrigue of her own, making yourself her confidant. And the way to bring her to intrigue, is to make her jealous of her husband in a wrong place; which the more you foment, the less you'll be suspected. This is my scheme, in short; which if you follow as you should do, my dear Berinthia, we may all four pass the winter very pleasantly.

Ber. Well, I could be glad to have nobody's sins to answer for but my own. But where there is a necessity—

Wor. Right: as you say, where there is a necessity, a Christian is bound to help his neighbour. So, good Berinthia, lose no time, but let us begin the dance as fast as we can.

Ber. Not till the fiddles are in tune, pray sir. Your lady's strings will be very apt to fly, I can tell you that, if they are wound up too hastily. But if you'll have patience to screw 'em to the pitch by degrees, I don't doubt but she may endure to be played upon.

Wor. Ay, and will make admirable music too, or I'm mistaken. But have you had no private closet discourse with her yet about males and females, and so forth, which may give you hopes in her constitution? for I know her morals are the devil against us.

Ber. I have had so much discourse with her, that I believe, were she once cured of her fondness to her husband, the fortress of her virtue would not be so impregnable as she fancies.

Wor. What! she runs, I'll warrant you, into that common mistake of fond wives, who conclude themselves virtuous, because they can refuse a man they don't like, when they have got one they do.

Ber. True; and therefore I think 'tis a presumptuous thing in a woman to assume the name of

virtuous, till she has heartily hated her husband, and been soundly in love with somebody else. Whom, if she has withstood—then—much good may it do her.

Wor. Well, so much for her virtue. Now, one word of her inclinations, and every one to their post. What opinion do you find she has of me?

Ber. What you could wish; she thinks you handsome and discreet.

Wor. Good; that's thinking half-seas over. One tide more brings us into port.

Ber. Perhaps it may, though still remember, there's a difficult bar to pass.

Wor. I know there is, but I don't question I shall get well over it, by the help of such a pilot.

Ber. You may depend upon your pilot, she'll do the best she can; so weigh anchor and begone as soon as you please.

Wor. I'm under sail already. Adieu!

Ber. Bon voyage!—[*Exit WORTHY.*] So, here's fine work! What a business have I undertaken! I'm a very pretty gentlewoman truly! But there was no avoiding it: he'd have ruin'd me, if I had refused him. Besides, faith, I begin to fancy there may be as much pleasure in carrying on another body's intrigue as one's own. This at least is certain, it exercises almost all the entertaining faculties of a woman: for there's employment for hypocrisy, invention, deceit, flattery, mischief, and lying.

Enter AMANDA, her Maid following her.

Maid. If you please, madam, only to say, whether you'll have me buy 'em or not.

Aman. Yes, no, go fiddle! I care not what you do. Prithce leave me.

Maid. I have done.

[*Exit.*]

Ber. What in the name of Jove's the matter with you?

Aman. The matter, Berinthia! I'm almost mad, I'm plagued to death.

Ber. Who is it that plagues you?

Aman. Who do you think should plague a wife, but her husband?

Ber. O ho, is it come to that? We shall have you wish yourself a widow by and by.

Aman. Would I were anything but what I am! A base ungrateful man, after what I have done for him, to use me thus!

Ber. What, he has been ogling now, I'll warrant you?

Aman. Yes, he has been ogling.

Ber. And so you are jealous? is that all?

Aman. That all! is jealousy then nothing?

Ber. It should be nothing, if I were in your case.

Aman. Why, what would you do?

Ber. I'd cure myself.

Aman. How?

Ber. Let blood in the fond vein: care as little for my husband as he did for me.

Aman. That would not stop his course.

Ber. Nor nothing else, when the wind's in the warm corner. Look you, Amanda, you may build castles in the air, and fume, and fret, and grow thin and lean, and pale and ugly, if you please. But I tell you, no man worth having is true to his wife, or can be true to his wife, or ever was, or ever will be so.

Aman. Do you then really think he's false to me? for I did but suspect him.

Ber. Think so! I know he's so.

Aman. Is it possible? Pray tell me what you know.

Ber. Don't press me then to name names, for that I have sworn I won't do.

Aman. Well, I won't; but let me know all you can without perjury.

Ber. I'll let you know enough to prevent any wise woman's dying of the pip; and I hope you'll pluck up your spirits, and show upon occasion you can be as good a wife as the best of 'em.

Aman. Well, what a woman can do I'll endeavour.

Ber. Oh, a woman can do a great deal, if once she sets her mind to it. Therefore pray don't stand trifling any longer, and teasing yourself with this and that, and your love and your virtue, and I know not what: but resolve to hold up your head, get a-tiptoe, and look over 'em all; for to my certain knowledge your husband is a pickeering elsewhere.

Aman. You are sure on't?

Ber. Positively he fell in love at the play.

Aman. Right, the very same. Do you know the ugly thing?

Ber. Yes, I know her well enough; but she's no such ugly thing neither.

Aman. Is she very handsome?

Ber. Truly I think so.

Aman. Hey ho!

Ber. What do you sigh for now?

Aman. Oh, my heart!

Ber. [*Aside.*] Only the pangs of nature; she's in labour of her love; Heaven send her a quick delivery, I'm sure she has a good midwife.

Aman. I'm very ill, I must go to my chamber. Dear Berinthia, don't leave me a moment.

Ber. No, don't fear.—[*Aside.*] I'll see you safe brought to bed, I'll warrant you.

[*Exeunt, AMANDA leaning upon BERINTHIA.*]

SCENE III.—Sir TUNBELLY CLUMSEY'S Country-House.

Enter TOM FASHION and LORY.

Fash. So, here's our inheritance, Lory, if we can but get into possession. But methinks the seat of our family looks like Noah's ark, as if the chief part on't were designed for the fowls of the air, and the beasts of the field.

Lory. Pray, sir, don't let your head run upon the orders of building here; get but the heiress, let the devil take the house.

Fash. Get but the house, let the devil take the heiress, I say; at least if she be as old Coupler describes her. But come, we have no time to squander. Knock at the door.—[*LORY knocks two or three times.*] What the devil, have they got no ears in this house? Knock harder.

Lory. Egad, sir, this will prove some enchanted castle; we shall have the giant come out by and by with his club, and beat our brains out.

[*Knocks again.*]

Fash. Hush; they come.

Servant. [*Within.*] Who is there?

Lory. Open the door and sec. Is that your country breeding?

Ser. Ay, but two words to a bargain.—Tummus. is the blunderbuss primed?

Fash. Oons, give 'em good words, Lory; we shall be shot here a fortune-catching.

Lory. Egad, sir, I think y'are in the right on't. —Ho! Mr. What-d'ye-call um.

[*Servant appears at the window with a blunderbuss.*]

Ser. Weall naw, what's yare business?

Fash. Nothing, sir, but to wait upon sir Tunbely, with your leave.

Ser. To wait upon sir Tunbely! Why, you'll find that's just as sir Tunbely pleases.

Fash. But will you do me the favour, sir, to know whether sir Tunbely pleases or not?

Ser. Why, look you, do you see, with good words much may be done.—Ralph, go thy weas, and ask sir Tunbely if he pleases to be waited upon. And dost hear? call to nurse that she may lock up Miss Hoyden before the geat's open.

Fash. D'ye hear that, Lory?

Lory. Ay, sir, I'm afraid we shall find a difficult job on't. Pray Heaven that old rogue Coupler han't sent us to fetch milk out of the gunroom.

Fash. I'll warrant thee all will go well. See, the door opens.

Enter Sir Tunbely, with his Servants armed with guns, clubs, pitchforks, scythes, &c.

Lory. [*Running behind his master.*] O Lord! O Lord! O Lord! we are both dead men!

Fash. Take heed, fool! thy fear will ruin us.

Lory. My fear, sir! 'sdeath, sir, I fear nothing.—[*Aside.*] Would I were well up to the chin in a horsepond!

Sir Tun. Who is it here has any business with me?

Fash. Sir, 'tis I, if your name be sir Tunbely Clumsey.

Sir Tun. Sir, my name is sir Tunbely Clumsey, whether you have any business with me or not. So you see I am not ashamed of my name—nor my face—neither.

Fash. Sir, you have no cause, that I know of.

Sir Tun. Sir, if you have no cause neither, I desire to know who you are; for till I know your name, I shall not ask you to come into my house; and when I know your name—'tis six to four I don't ask you neither.

Fash. [*Giving him a letter.*] Sir, I hope you'll find this letter an authentic passport.

Sir Tun. Cod's my life! I ask your lordship's pardon ten thousand times.—[*To a Servant.*] Here, run in a-doors quickly. Get a Scotch-coal fire in the great parlour; set all the Turkey-work chairs in their places; get the great brass candlesticks out, and be sure stick the sockets full of laurel, run!—[*Exit Servant.*] My lord, I ask your lordship's pardon.—[*To other Servants.*] And do you hear, run away to nurse, bid her let Miss Hoyden loose again, and if it was not shifting day, let her put on a clean tucker, quick!—[*Exit Servants confusedly.*] I hope your honour will excuse the disorder of my family; we are not used to receive men of your lordship's great quality every day. Pray where are your coaches, and servants, my lord?

Fash. Sir, that I might give you and your fair daughter a proof how impatient I am to be nearer akin to you, I left my equipage to follow me, and came away post with only one servant.

Sir Tun. Your lordship does me too much honour. It was exposing your person to too much

fatigue and danger, I protest it was. But my daughter shall endeavour to make you what amends she can; and though I say it that should not say it—Hoyden has charms.

Fash. Sir, I am not a stranger to them, though I am to her. Common fame has done her justice.

Sir Tun. My lord, I am common fame's very grateful humble servant. My lord—my girl's young, Hoyden is young, my lord; but this I must say for her, what she wants in art, she has by nature; what she wants in experience, she has in breeding; and what's wanting in her age, is made good in her constitution. So pray, my lord, walk in: pray, my lord, walk in.

Fash. Sir, I wait upon you.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.—*A Room in the same.*

Miss HOYDEN discovered alone.

Hoyd. Sure never nobody was used as I am. I know well enough what other girls do, for all they think to make a fool of me. It's well I have a husband a-coming, or, ecod, I'd marry the baker, I would so! Nobody can knock at the gate, but presently I must be locked up; and here's the young greyhound bitch can run loose about the house all the day long, she can; 'tis very well.

Nurse. [*Without.*] Miss Hoyden! miss! miss! miss! Miss Hoyden!

Enter Nurse.

Hoyd. Well, what do you make such a noise for, ha? what do you din a body's ears for? Can't one be at quiet for you?

Nurse. What do I din your ears for! Here's one come will din your ears for you.

Hoyd. What care I who's come? I care not a fig who comes, nor who goes, as long as I must be locked up like the ale-cellar.

Nurse. That, miss, is for fear you should be drunk before you are ripe.

Hoyd. Oh, don't you trouble your head about that; I'm as ripe as you, though not so mellow.

Nurse. Very well; now have I a good mind to lock you up again, and not let you see my lord to-night.

Hoyd. My lord! why, is my husband come?

Nurse. Yes, marry is he, and a goodly person too.

Hoyd. [*Hugging Nurse.*] O my dear nurse! forgive me this once, and I'll never misuse you again; no, if I do you shall give me three thumps on the back, and a great pinch by the cheek.

Nurse. Ah, the poor thing, see how it melts! It's as full of good-nature as an egg's full of meat.

Hoyd. But, my dear nurse, don't lie now; is he come by your troth?

Nurse. Yes, by my truly, is he.

Hoyd. O Lord! I'll go put on my laced smock, though I'm whipped till the blood run down my heels for't.

Nurse. Eh—the Lord succour thee! How thou art delighted!

[*Exit running.*]

[*Exit after her.*]

SCENE V.—*Another Room in the same.*

Enter Sir TUNBELLY and TOM FASHION. Servant following with wine.

Sir Tun. My lord, I'm proud of the honour to see your lordship within my doors; and I humbly crave leave to bid you welcome in a cup of sack wine.

Fash. Sir, to your daughter's health. [*Drinks.*]

Sir Tun. Ah, poor girl, she'll be scared out of her wits on her wedding-night; for, honestly speaking, she does not know a man from a woman but by his beard and his breeches.

Fash. Sir, I don't doubt but she has a virtuous education, which with the rest of her merit makes me long to see her mine. I wish you would dispense with the canonical hour, and let it be this very night.

Sir Tun. Oh, not so soon neither! that's shooting my girl before you bid her stand. No, give her fair warning, we'll sign and seal to-night, if you please; and this day seven-night—let the jade look to her quarters.

Fash. This day se'nnight!—why, what do you take me for a ghost, sir? 'Slife, sir, I'm made of flesh and blood, and bones and sinews, and can no more live a week without your daughter—[*Aside*] than I can live a month with her.

Sir Tun. Oh, I'll warrant you, my hero; young men are hot, I know, but they don't boil over at that rate, neither. Besides, my wench's wedding-gown is not come home yet.

Fash. Oh, no matter, sir, I'll take her in her shift.—[*Aside.*] A pox of this old fellow! he'll delay the business till my damned star finds me out and discovers me.—[*Aloud.*] Pray, sir, let it be done without ceremony, 'twill save money.

Sir Tun. Money!—save money when Hoyden's to be married! Udswoons I'll give my wench a wedding-dinner, though I go to grass with the king of Assyria for't; and such a dinner it shall be, as is not to be cooked in the poaching of an egg. Therefore, my noble lord, have a little patience, we'll go and look over our deeds and settlements immediately; and as for your bride, though you may be sharp-set before she's quite ready, I'll engage for my girl she stays your stomach at last. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*A Room in Sir TUNBELLY CLUMSEY'S Country-House.*

Enter Miss HOYDEN and Nurse.

Nurse. Well, miss, how do you like your husband that is to be?

Hoyd. O Lord, nurse! I'm so overjoyed I can scarce contain myself.

Nurse. Oh, but you must have a care of being too fond; for men now-a-days hate a woman that loves 'em.

Hoyd. Love him! why do you think I love him, nurse? ecod I would not care if he were hanged, so I were but once married to him!—No—that which pleases me, is to think what work I'll make when I get to London; for when I am a wife and a lady both, nurse, ecod I'll flaunt it with the best of 'em.

Nurse. Look, look, if his honour be not a-coming again to you! Now, if I were sure you would behave yourself handsomely, and not disgrace me that have brought you up, I'd leave you alone together.

Hoyd. That's my best nurse, do as you would be done by; trust us together this once, and if I don't show my breeding from the head to the foot of me, may I be twice married, and die a maid.

Nurse. Well this once I'll venture you; but if you disparage me—

Hoyd. Never fear, I'll show him my parts, I'll warrant him.—[*Exit Nurse.*] These old women are so wise when they get a poor girl in their clutches! but ere it be long, I shall know what's what, as well as the best of 'em.

Enter TOM FASHION.

Fash. Your servant, madam; I'm glad to find you alone, for I have something of importance to speak to you about.

Hoyd. Sir (my lord, I meant), you may speak to me about what you please, I shall give you a civil answer.

Fash. You give me so obliging a one, it encourages me to tell you in few words what I think both for your interest and mine. Your father, I suppose you know, has resolved to make me happy in being your husband, and I hope I may depend upon your consent, to perform what he desires.

Hoyd. Sir, I never disobey my father in anything but eating of green gooseberries.

Fash. So good a daughter must needs be an admirable wife; I am therefore impatient till you are mine, and hope you will so far consider the violence of my love, that you won't have the cruelty to defer my happiness so long as your father designs it.

Hoyd. Pray, my lord, how long is that?

Fash. Madam, a thousand year—a whole week.

Hoyd. A week!—why I shall be an old woman by that time.

Fash. And I an old man, which you'll find a greater misfortune than t'other.

Hoyd. Why I thought it was to be to-morrow morning, as soon as I was up; I'm sure nurse told me so.

Fash. And it shall be to-morrow morning still, if you'll consent.

Hoyd. If I'll consent! Why I thought I was to obey you as my husband.

Fash. That's when we are married; till then, I am to obey you.

Hoyd. Why then if we are to take it by turns, it's the same thing; I'll obey you now, and when we are married, you shall obey me.

Fash. With all my heart; but I doubt we must get nurse on our side, or we shall hardly prevail with the chaplain.

Hoyd. No more we shan't indeed, for he loves

her better than he loves his pulpit, and would always be a preaching to her by his good will.

Fash. Why then, my dear little bedfellow, if you'll call her hither, we'll try to persuade her presently.

Hoyd. O Lord, I can tell you a way how to persuade her to anything.

Fash. How's that?

Hoyd. Why tell her she's a wholesome comely woman—and give her half-a-crown.

Fash. Nay, if that will do she shall have half a score of 'em.

Hoyd. O gemini! for half that, she'd marry you herself. I'll run and call her. [Exit.]

Fash. So, matters go swimmingly. This is a rare girl, 't' faith; I shall have a fine time on't with her at London. I'm much mistaken if she don't prove a March hare all the year round. What a scampering chase will she make on't, when she finds the whole kennel of beaux at her tail! hey to the park, and the play, and the church, and the devil; she'll show them sport, I'll warrant 'em. But no matter, she brings an estate will afford me a separate maintenance.

Re-enter Miss HOYDEN and Nurse.

How do you do, good mistress nurse? I desired your young lady would give me leave to see you, that I might thank you for your extraordinary care and conduct in her education; pray accept of this small acknowledgment for it at present, and depend upon my farther kindness, when I shall be that happy thing her husband.

Nurse. [Aside.] Gold by mackings!—[Aloud.] Your honour's goodness is too great; alas! all I can boast of is, I gave her pure good milk, and so your honour would have said, an you had seen how the poor thing sucked it.—Eh, God's blessing on the sweet face on't! how it used to hang at this poor teat, and suck and squeeze, and kick and sprawl it would, till the belly on't was so full, it would drop off like a leech.

Hoyd. [Aside to Nurse angrily.] Pray one word with you. Prithree nurse don't stand ripping up old stories, to make one ashamed before one's love. Do you think such a fine proper gentleman as he cares for a fiddlecome tale of a draggle-tailed girl? If you have a mind to make him have a good opinion of a woman, don't tell him what one did then, tell him what one can do now.—[To Tom FASHION.] I hope your honour will excuse my mismaners to whisper before you; it was only to give some orders about the family.

Fash. O everything, madam, is to give way to business! Besides, good housewifery is a very commendable quality in a young lady.

Hoyd. Pray, sir, are the young ladies good housewives at London town? Do they darn their own linen?

Fash. O no, they study how to spend money, not to save it.

Hoyd. Ecod, I don't know out that may be better sport than t'other; ha, nurse?

Fash. Well, you shall have your choice when you come there.

Hoyd. Shall I!—then by my troth I'll get there as fast as I can.—[To Nurse.] His honour desires you'll be so kind as to let us be married to-morrow

Nurse. To-morrow, my dear madam?

Fash. Yes, to-morrow, sweet nurse, privately;

young folks, you know, are impatient, and sir Tunbelly would make us stay a week for a wedding dinner. Now all things being signed and sealed, and agreed, I fancy there could be no great harm in practising a scene or two of matrimony in private, if it were only to give us the better assurance when we come to play it in public.

Nurse. Nay, I must confess stolen pleasures are sweet; but if you should be married now, what will you do when sir Tunbelly calls for you to be wedded?

Hoyd. Why then we'll be married again.

Nurse. What, twice, my child?

Hoyd. Ecod, I don't care how often I'm married, not I.

Fash. Pray, nurse, don't you be against your young lady's good, for by this means she'll have the pleasure of two wedding-days.

Hoyd. [To Nurse softly.] And of two wedding-nights too, nurse.

Nurse. Well, I'm such a tender-hearted fool, I find I can refuse nothing; so you shall e'en follow your own inventions.

Hoyd. Shall I!—[Aside.] O Lord, I could leap over the moon!

Fash. Dear nurse, this goodness of yours shan't go unrewarded; but now you must employ your power with Mr. Bull the chaplain, that he may do us his friendly office too, and then we shall all be happy: do you think you can prevail with him?

Nurse. Prevail with him!—or he shall never prevail with me, I can tell him that.

Hoyd. My lord, she has had him upon the hip this seven year.

Fash. I'm glad to hear it; nowever to strengthen your interest with him, you may let him know I have several fat livings in my gift, and that the first that falls shall be in your disposal.

Nurse. Nay, then I'll make him marry more folks than one, I'll promise him.

Hoyd. Faith do, nurse, make him marry you too, I'm sure he'll do't for a fat living: for he loves eating more than he loves his Bible; and I have often heard him say, a fat living was the best meat in the world.

Nurse. Ay, and I'll make him commend the sauce too, or I'll bring his gown to a cassock, I will so.

Fash. Well, nurse, whilst you go and settle matters with him, then your lady and I will go and take a walk in the garden.

Nurse. I'll do your honour's business in the catching up of a garter. [Exit.]

Fash. [Giving her his hand.] Come, madam, dare you venture yourself along with me?

Hoyd. O dear, yes, sir, I don't think you'll do anything to me I need be afraid on. [Exeunt.]

SCENE II.—LOVELESS'S Lodgings.

Enter AMANDA and BERTHIA.

SONG.

I smile at Love and all its arts,
The charming Cynthia cried:
Take heed, for Love has piercing darts,
A wounded swain replied.
Once free and blest as you are now,
I trifled with his charms,
I pointed at his little bow,
And sported with his arms:

Till urged too far, Revenge! he cries,
A fatal shaft he drew,
It took its passage through your eyes,
And to my heart it flew.

To tear it thence I tried in vain,
To strive I quickly found
Was only to increase the pain,
And to enlarge the wound.
Ah! much too well, I fear, you know
What pain I'm to endure,
Since what your eyes alone could do,
Your heart alone can cure.
And that (grant Heaven I may mistake!)
I doubt is doom'd to bear
A burden for another's sake,
Who ill rewards its care.

Aman. Well, now, Berinthia, I'm at leisure to hear what 'twas you had to say to me.

Ber. What I had to say was only to echo the sighs and groans of a dying lover.

Aman. Phu! will you never learn to talk in earnest of anything?

Ber. Why this shall be in earnest, if you please: for my part, I only tell you matter of fact, you may take it which way you like best; but if you'll follow the women of the town, you'll take it both ways; for when a man offers himself to one of them, first she takes him in jest, and then she takes him in earnest.

Aman. I'm sure there's so much jest and earnest in what you say to me, I scarce know how to take it; but I think you have bewitched me, for I don't find it possible to be angry with you, say what you will.

Ber. I'm very glad to hear it, for I have no mind to quarrel with you, for some reasons that I'll brag of; but quarrel or not, smile or frown, I must tell you what I have suffered upon your account.

Aman. Upon my account!

Ber. Yes, upon yours; I have been forced to sit still and hear you commended for two hours together, without one compliment to myself; now don't you think a woman had a blessed time of that?

Aman. Alas! I should have been unconcerned at it; I never knew where the pleasure lay of being praised by the men. But pray who was this that commended me so?

Ber. One you have a mortal aversion to, Mr. Worthy; he used you like a text, he took you all to pieces, but spoke so learnedly upon every point, one might see the spirit of the church was in him. If you are a woman, you'd have been in an ecstasy to have heard how feelingly he handled your hair, your eyes, your nose, your mouth, your teeth, your tongue, your chin, your neck, and so forth. Thus he preached for an hour, but when he came to use an application, he observed that all these without a gallant were nothing.—Now consider of what has been said, and Heaven give you grace to put it in practice.

Aman. Alas! Berinthia, did I incline to a gallant (which you know I do not,) do you think a man so nice as he could have the least concern for such a plain unpolished thing as I am? it is impossible!

Ber. Now have you a great mind to put me upon commending you.

Aman. Indeed that was not my design.

Ber. Nay, if it were, it's all one, for I won't do't,

I'll leave that to your looking-glass. But to show you I have some good-nature left, I'll commend him, and may be that may do as well.

Aman. You have a great mind to persuade me I am in love with him.

Ber. I have a great mind to persuade you, you don't know what you are in love with.

Aman. I am sure I am not in love with him, nor never shall be, so let that pass. But you were saying something you would commend him for.

Ber. Oh! you'd be glad to hear a good character of him, however.

Aman. Psha!

Ber. Psha!—Well 'tis a foolish undertaking for women in these kind of matters to pretend to deceive one another.—Have not I been bred a woman as well as you?

Aman. What then!

Ber. Why then I understand my trade so well, that whenever I am told of a man I like, I cry, psha! But that I may spare you the pains of putting me a second time in mind to commend him, I'll proceed, and give you this account of him: That though 'tis possible he may have had women with as good faces as your ladyship's, (no discredit to it neither,) yet you must know your cautious behaviour, with that reserve in your humour, has given him his death's wound; he mortally hates a coquette. He says 'tis impossible to love where we cannot esteem; and that no woman can be esteemed by a man who has sense, if she makes herself cheap in the eye of a fool; that pride to a woman is as necessary as humility to a divine; and that far-fetched, and dear-bought, is meat for gentlemen as well as for ladies;—in short, that every woman who has beauty may set a price upon herself, and that by under-selling the market, they ruin the trade. This is his doctrine, how do you like it?

Aman. So well, that since I never intend to have a gallant for myself, if I were to recommend one to a friend he should be the man.

Enter WORTHY.

Bless me! he's here, pray Heaven he did not hear me.

Ber. If he did, it won't hurt your reputation; your thoughts are as safe in his heart as in your own.

Wor. I venture in at an unseasonable time of night, ladies; I hope, if I am troublesome, you'll use the same freedom in turning me out again.

Aman. I believe it can't be late, for Mr. Loveless is not come home yet, and he usually keeps good hours.

Wor. Madam, I'm afraid he'll transgress a little to-night; for he told me about half an hour ago he was going to sup with some company he doubted would keep him out till three or four o'clock in the morning, and desired I would let my servant acquaint you with it, that you might not expect him: but my fellow's a blunder-head; so lest he should make some mistake, I thought it my duty to deliver the message myself.

Aman. I'm very sorry he should give you that trouble, sir: but—

Ber. But since he has, will you give me leave, madam, to keep him to play at ombre with us?

Aman. Cousin, you know you command my house.

Wor. [To BERINTHIA.] And, madam, you know you command me, though I am a very wretched gamester.

Ber. Oh! you play well enough to lose your money, and that's all the ladies require; so without any more ceremony, let us go into the next room and call for the cards.

Aman. With all my heart.

[Exit WORTHY, leading AMANDA.]

Ber. Well, how this business will end Heaven knows; but she seems to me to be in as fair a way—as a boy is to be a rogue, when he's put clerk to an attorney. [Exit.]

SCENE III.—BERINTHIA'S Apartment.

Enter LOVELESS cautiously in the dark.

Love. So, thus far all's well. I'm got into her bedchamber, and I think nobody has perceived me steal into the house; my wife don't expect me home till four o'clock; so, if Berinthia comes to bed by eleven, I shall have a chase of five hours. Let me see, where shall I hide myself? Under her bed? No; we shall have her maid searching there for something or other; her closet's a better place, and I have a master-key will open it. I'll e'en in there, and attack her just when she comes to her prayers, that's the most like to prove her critical minute, for then the devil will be there to assist me. [Retires into the closet, shutting the door after him.]

Enter BERINTHIA, with a candle in her hand.

Ber. Well, sure I am the best-natured woman in the world, I that love cards so well (there is but one thing upon the earth I love better), have pretended letters to write, to give my friends a *tête-à-tête*: however, I'm innocent, for piquet is the game I set 'em to: at her own peril be it, if she ventures to play with him at any other. But now what shall I do with myself? I don't know how in the world to pass my time; would Loveless were here to *badiner* a little! Well, he's a charming fellow; I don't wonder his wife's so fond of him. What if I should sit down and think of him till I fall asleep, and dream of the Lord knows what? Oh, but then if I should dream we were married, I should be frightened out of my wits!—[Seeing a book.] What's this book? I think I had best go read. O splenetic! it's a sermon. Well, I'll go into my closet and read the Plotting Sisters.—[She opens the closet, sees LOVELESS, and shrieks out.] O Lord, a ghost! a ghost! a ghost! a ghost!

Re-enter LOVELESS, running to her.

Love. Peace, my dear, it's no ghost; take it in your arms, you'll find 'tis worth a hundred of 'em.

Ber. Run in again; here's somebody coming. [LOVELESS retires as before.]

Enter ABIGAIL.

Abig. O Lord, madam! what's the matter?

Ber. O Heavens! I'm almost frightened out of my wits; I thought verily I had seen a ghost, and 'twas nothing but the white curtain, with a black hood pinned up against it: you may begone again; I am the fearfulest fool! [Exit ABIGAIL.]

Re-enter LOVELESS.

Love. Is the coast clear?

Ber. The coast clear! I suppose you are clear, you'd never play such a trick as this else.

Love. I am very well pleased with my trick thus far, and shall be so till I have played it out, if it ben't your fault. Where's my wife?

Ber. At cards.

Love. With whom?

Ber. With Worthy.

Love. Then we are safe enough.

Ber. You are so! Some husbands would be of another mind, if he were at cards with their wives.

Love. And they'd be in the right on't, too: but I dare trust mine.—Besides, I know he's in love in another place, and he's not one of those who court half-a-dozen at a time.

Ber. Nay, the truth on't is, you'd pity him if you saw how uneasy he is at being engaged with us; but 'twas my malice, I fancied he was to meet his mistress somewhere else, so did it to have the pleasure of seeing him fret.

Love. What says Amanda to my staying abroad so late?

Ber. Why, she's as much out of humour as he; I believe they wish one another at the devil.

Love. Then I'm afraid they'll quarrel at play, and soon throw up the cards.—[Offering to pull her into the closet.] Therefore, my dear, charming angel, let us make good use of our time.

Ber. Heavens! what do you mean?

Love. Pray what do you think I mean?

Ber. I don't know.

Love. I'll show you.

Ber. You may as well tell me.

Love. No, that would make you blush worse than t'other.

Ber. Why, do you intend to make me blush?

Love. Faith I can't tell that; but if I do, it shall be in the dark. [Pulling her.]

Ber. O Heavens! I would not be in the dark with you for all the world!

Love. I'll try that. [Puts out the candle.]

Ber. O Lord! are you mad? What shall I do for light?

Love. You'll do as well without it.

Ber. Why, one can't find a chair to sit down.

Love. Come into the closet, madam, there's moonshine upon the couch.

Ber. Nay, never pull, for I will not go.

Love. Then you must be carried. [Takes her in his arms.]

Ber. [Very softly.] Help! help! I'm ravished! ruined! undone! O Lord, I shall never be able to bear it! [Exit LOVELESS, carrying BERINTHIA.]

SCENE IV.—A Room in Sir TUNBELLY CLUMSEY'S House.

Enter Miss HOYDEN, Nurse, TOM FASHION, and BULL.

Fash. This quick despatch of yours, Mr. Bull, I take so kindly, it shall give you a claim to my favour as long as I live, I do assure you.

Hoyd. And to mine, too, I promise you.

Bull. I most humbly thank your honours; and I hope, since it has been my lot to join you in the holy bands of wedlock, you will so well cultivate the soil, which I have craved a blessing on, that your children may swarm about you like bees about a honeycomb.

Hoyd. Ecod, with all my heart; the more the merrier, I say; ha, nurse!

Enter LORY; he takes his master hastily aside.

Lory. One word with you, for Heaven's sake!

Fash. What the devil's the matter?

Lory. Sir, your fortune's ruined; and I don't think your life's worth a quarter of an hour's purchase. Yonder's your brother arrived with two coaches and six horses, twenty footmen and pages, a coat worth four-score pound, and a periwig down to his knees: so judge what will become of your lady's heart.

Fash. Death and furies! 'tis impossible!

Lory. Fiends and spectres! sir, 'tis true.

Fash. Is he in the house yet?

Lory. No, they are capitulating with him at the gate. The porter tells him he's come to run away with Miss Hoyden, and has cocked the blunderbuss at him; your brother swears Gad damme, they are a parcel of clowns, and he has a good mind to break off the match; but they have given the word for sir Tunbely, so I doubt all will come out presently. Pray, sir, resolve what you'll do this moment, for egad they'll maul you.

Fash. Stay a little.—[*To Miss HOYDEN.*] My dear, here's a troublesome business my man tells me of, but don't be frightened, we shall be too hard for the rogue. Here's an impudent fellow at the gate (not knowing I was come hither *incognito*) has taken my name upon him, in hopes to run away with you.

Hoyd. O the brazen-faced varlet, it's well we are married, or maybe we might never have been so.

Fash. [*Aside.*] Egad, like enough!—[*Aloud.*] Prithee, dear doctor, run to sir Tunbely, and stop him from going to the gate before I speak with him.

Bull. I fly, my good lord.

[*Exit.*]

Nurse. An't please your honour, my lady and I had best lock ourselves up till the danger be over.

Fash. Ay, by all means.

Hoyd. Not so fast, I won't be locked up any more. I'm married.

Fash. Yes, pray my dear do, till we have seized this rascal.

Hoyd. Nay, if you pray me, I'll do anything.

[*Exeunt Miss HOYDEN and Nurse.*]

Fash. Oh! here's Sir Tunbely coming.—Hark you, sirrah, things are better than you imagine; the wedding's over.

Lory. The devil it is, sir!

Fash. Not a word, all's safe: but sir Tunbely don't know it, nor must not yet; so I am resolved to brazen the business out, and have the pleasure of turning the impostor upon his lordship, which I believe may easily be done.

Enter Sir TUNBELLY, BULL, and Servants, armed.

Fash. Did you ever hear, sir, of so impudent an undertaking?

Sir Tun. Never, by the mass! But we'll tickle him, I'll warrant him.

Fash. They tell me, sir, he has a great many people with him disguised like servants.

Sir Tun. Ay, ay, rogues enough; but I'll soon raise the posse upon 'em.

Fash. Sir, if you'll take my advice, we'll go a shorter way to work. I find whoever this spark is, he knows nothing of my being privately here; so if you pretend to receive him civilly, he'll enter without suspicion; and as soon as he is within the gate,

we'll whip up the drawbridge upon his back, let fly the blunderbuss to disperse his crew, and so commit him to jail.

Sir Tun. 'Egad, your lordship is an ingenious person, and a very great general; but shall we kill any of 'em or not?

Fash. No, no; fire over their heads only to fright 'em; I'll warrant the regiment scours when the colonel's a prisoner.

Sir Tun. Then come along, my boys, and let your courage be great—for your danger is but small.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE V.—*The Gate before Sir TUNBELLY CLUMSEY'S House.*

Enter Lord FOPPINGTON, with LA VEROLE and Servants.

Lord Fop. A pax of these bumptious people! will they open the gate, or do they desire I should grow at their moat-side like a willow?—[*To the Porter.*] Hey, fellow—prithee do me the favour, in as few words as thou canst find to express thyself, to tell me whether thy master will admit me or not, that I may turn about my coach, and be gone.

Porter. Here's my master himself now at hand, he's of age, he'll give you his answer.

Enter Sir TUNBELLY and Servants.

Sir Tun. My most noble lord, I crave your pardon for making your honour wait so long; but my orders to my servants have been to admit nobody without my knowledge, for fear of some attempts upon my daughter, the times being full of plots and roguery.

Lord Fop. Much caution, I must confess, is a sign of great wisdom: but stap my vitals, I have got a cold enough to destroy a porter!—He, hem—

Sir Tun. I am very sorry for't, indeed, my lord; but if your lordship please to walk in, we'll help you to some brown sugar-candy. My lord, I'll show you the way.

Lord Fop. Sir, I follow you with pleasure.

[*Exit with Sir TUNBELLY CLUMSEY. As LA VEROLE and the rest are about to follow him in, the Servants within clap the door against them.*]

Servants. [*Within.*] Nay, hold you me, there sir.

La Ver. Jernie, qu'est-ce que veut dire ça?

Sir Tun. [*Within.*] Fire, porter.

Porter. [*Fires.*] Have among you, my masters.

La Ver. Ah, je suis mort!—

[*Runs off with the rest.*]

Porter. Not one soldier left by the mass!

SCENE VI.—*A Hall in the same.*

Enter Sir TUNBELLY CLUMSEY, BULL, Constable, Clerk, and Servants, with Lord FOPPINGTON, disarmed.

Sir Tun. Come, bring him along, bring him along!

Lord Fop. What the pax do you mean, gentlemen! Is it fair-time, that you are all drunk before dinner?

Sir Tun. Drunk, sirrah!—Here's an impudent rogue for you!—Drunk or sober, bully, I'm a justice of the peace, and know how to deal with strollers.

Lord Fop. Strollers!

Sir Tun. Ay, strollers. Come, give an account

of yourself; what's your name, where do you live? do you pay scot and lot? are you a Williamite, or a Jacobite? Come.

Lord Fop. And why dost thou ask me so many impertinent questions?

Sir Tun. Because I'll make you answer 'em before I have done with you, you rascal, you!

Lord Fop. Before Gad, all the answer I can make thee to 'em, is, that thou art a very extraordinary old fellow; stap my vitals!

Sir Tun. Nay, if you are for joking with deputy lieutenants, we know how to deal with you.—[*To Clerk.*] Here, draw a warrant for him immediately.

Lord Fop. A warrant!—What the devil is't thou wouldst be at, old gentleman?

Sir Tun. I would be at you, sirrah, (if my hands were not tied as a magistrate,) and with these two double fists beat your teeth down your throat, you dog you!

Lord Fop. And why wouldst thou spoil my face at that rate?

Sir Tun. For your design to rob me of my daughter, villain.

Lord Fop. Rab thee of thy daughter!—Now I do begin to believe I am a-bed and a-sleep, and that all this is but a dream.—If it be, 'twill be an agreeable surprise enough, to waken by and by; and instead of the impertinent company of a nasty country justice, find myself perhaps in the arms of a woman of quality.—[*To Sir TUNBELLY.*] Prithee, old father, wilt thou give me leave to ask thee one question?

Sir Tun. I can't tell whether I will or not, till I know what it is.

Lord Fop. Why, then it is, whether thou didst not write to my Lord Foppington to come down and marry thy daughter?

Sir Tun. Yes, marry did I; and my Lord Foppington is come down, and shall marry my daughter before she's a day older.

Lord Fop. Now give me thy hand, dear dad; I thought we should understand one another at last.

Sir Tun. This fellow's mad.—Here, bind him hand and foot. [*Servants bind him down.*]

Lord Fop. Nay, prithee, knight, leave fooling; thy jest begins to grow dull.

Sir Tun. Bind him, I say, he's mad.—Bread and water, a dark room and a whip may bring him to his senses again.

Lord Fop. [*Aside.*] Egad! if I don't waken quickly, by all I can see, this is like to prove one of the most impertinent dreams that ever I dreamt in my life.

Enter Miss HOYDEN and Nurse.

Hoyd. [*Going up to him.*] Is this he that would have run away with me? Fo! how he stinks of sweets!—Pray, father, let him be dragged through the horse-pond.

Lord Fop. [*Aside.*] This must be my wife by her natural inclination to her husband.

Hoyd. Pray, father, what do you intend to do with him? hang him?

Sir Tun. That at least, child.

Nurse. Ay, and it's e'en too good for him too.

Lord Fop. [*Aside.*] Madame la gouvernante, I presume. Hitherto this appears to me to be one of the most extraordinary families that ever man of quality matched into.

Sir Tun. What's become of my lord, daughter?

Hoyd. He's just coming, sir.

Lord Fop. [*Aside.*] My lord! what does he mean by that now?

Enter TOM FASHION and LORY.

[*Aloud.*] Stap my vitals, Tam! now the dream's out.

Fash. Is this the fellow, sir, that designed to trick me of your daughter?

Sir Tun. This is he, my lord, how do you like him? Is not he a pretty fellow to get a fortune?

Fash. I find by his dress he thought your daughter might be taken with a beau.

Hoyd. O gemini! Is this a beau? let me see him again.—Ha! I find a beau's no such ugly thing neither.

Fash. [*Aside.*] Egad, she'll be in love with him presently; I'll e'en have him sent away to jail.—[*To Lord FOPPINGTON.*] Sir, though your undertaking shows you are a person of no extraordinary modesty, I suppose you han't confidence enough to expect much favour from me?

Lord Fop. Strike me dumb, Tam, thou art a very impudent fellow!

Nurse. Look, if the varlet has not the frontery to call his lordship plain Thomas!

Bull. The business is, he would feign himself mad, to avoid going to jail.

Lord Fop. [*Aside.*] That must be the chaplain by his unfolding of mysteries.

Sir Tun. Come, is the warrant writ?

Clerk. Yes, sir.

Sir Tun. Give me the pen, I'll sign it.—So, now, constable, away with him.

Lord Fop. Hold one moment, pray, gentlemen.—My Lord Foppington, shall I beg one word with your lordship?

Nurse. O ho, is't my lord with him now? See how afflictions will humble folks.

Hoyd. Pray, my lord, don't let him whisper too close, lest he bite your ear off.

Lord Fop. I am not altogether so hungry as your ladyship is pleased to imagine.—[*Aside to TOM FASHION.*] Look you, Tam, I am sensible I have not been so kind to you as I ought, but I hope you'll forget what's past, and accept of the five thousand pounds I offer; thou mayst live in extreme splendour with it, stap my vitals!

Fash. It's a much easier matter to prevent a disease than to cure it; a quarter of that sum would have secured your mistress; twice as much won't redeem her. [*Leaving him.*]

Sir Tun. Well, what says he?

Fash. Only the rascal offered me a bribe to let him go.

Sir Tun. Ay, he shall go, with a pox to him!—Lead on, constable.

Lord Fop. One word more, and I have done.

Sir Tun. Before Gad! thou art an impudent fellow, to trouble the court at this rate after thou art condemned; but speak once for all.

Lord Fop. Why, then, once for all; I have at last luckily called to mind that there is a gentleman of this country, who I believe cannot live far from this place, if he were here, would satisfy you. I am Navelty, baron of Foppington, with five thousand pounds a year, and that fellow there a rascal, not worth a groat.

Sir Tun. Very well; now, who is this honest gentleman you are so well acquainted with?—

[To TOM FASHION.] Come, sir, we shall hamper him.

Lord Fop. 'Tis sir John Friendly.

Sir Tun. So; he lives within half a mile, and came down into the country but last night; this bold-faced fellow thought he had been at London still, and so quoted him; now we shall display him in his colours: I'll send for Sir John immediately.—[To a Servant.] Here, fellow, away presently, and desire my neighbour he'll do me the favour to step over, upon an extraordinary occasion.—[Exit Servant.] And in the meanwhile you had best secure this sharper in the gate-house.

Constable. An't please your worship, he may chance to give us the slip thence. If I were worthy to advise, I think the dog-kennel's a surer place.

Sir Tun. With all my heart; anywhere.

Lord Fop. Nay, for Heaven's sake, sir! do me the favour to put me in a clean room, that I mayn't daub my clothes.

Sir Tun. O, when you have married my daughter, her estate will afford you new ones.—Away with him!

Lord Fop. A dirty country justice is a barbarous magistrate, stap my vitals!

[Exit Constable with LORD FOPPINGTON.]

Fash. [Aside.] Egad, I must prevent this knight's coming, or the house will grow soon too hot to hold me.—[To Sir TUNBELLY.] Sir, I fancy 'tis not worth while to trouble sir John upon this impertinent fellow's desire: I'll send and call the messenger back.

Sir Tun. Nay, with all my heart; for, to be sure, he thought he was far enough off, or the rogue would never have named him.

Re-enter Servant.

Ser. Sir, I met sir John just lighting at the gate; he's come to wait upon you.

Sir Tun. Nay, then, it happens as one could wish.

Fash. [Aside.] The devil it does!—Lory, you see how things are, here will be a discovery presently, and we shall have our brains beat out; for my brother will be sure to swear he don't know me: therefore, run into the stable, take the two first horses you can light on, I'll slip out at the back door, and we'll away immediately.

Lory. What, and leave your lady, sir?

Fash. There's no danger in that as long as I have taken possession; I shall know how to treat with 'em well enough, if once I am out of their reach. Away! I'll steal after thee.

[Exit LORY; his master follows him out at one door as SIR JOHN FRIENDLY is entering at the other.]

Enter SIR JOHN FRIENDLY.

Sir Tun. Sir John, you are the welcomest man alive; I had just sent a messenger to desire you'd step over, upon a very extraordinary occasion. We are all in arms here.

Sir John. How so?

Sir Tun. Why, you must know, a finical sort of a tawdry fellow here (I don't know who the devil he is, not I) hearing, I suppose, that the match was concluded between my Lord Foppington and my girl Hoyden, comes impudently to the gate, and with a whole pack of rogues in liveries, and would have passed upon me for his lordship: but what does I? I comes up to him boldly at the

head of his guards, takes him by the throat, strikes up his heels, binds him hand and foot, despatches a warrant, and commits him prisoner to the dog-kennel.

Sir John. So; but how do you know but this was my lord? for I was told he set out from London the day before me, with a very fine retinue, and intended to come directly hither.

Sir Tun. Why, now to show you how many lies people raise in that damned town, he came two nights ago post, with only one servant, and is now in the house with me. But you don't know the cream of the jest yet; this same rogue, (that lies yonder neck and heels among the hounds,) thinking you were out of the country, quotes you for his acquaintance, and said if you were here, you'd justify him to be Lord Foppington, and I know not what.

Sir John. Pray will you let me see him?

Sir Tun. Ay, that you shall presently.—[To a Servant.] Here, fetch the prisoner.

[Exit Servant.]

Sir John. I wish there ben't some mistake in the business.—Where's my lord? I know him very well.

Sir Tun. He was here just now.—[To BULL.] See for him, doctor, tell him Sir John is here to wait upon him.

[Exit BULL.]

Sir John. I hope, sir Tunbelly, the young lady is not married yet.

Sir Tun. No, things won't be ready this week. But why do you say you hope she is not married?

Sir John. Some foolish fancies only, perhaps I'm mistaken.

Re-enter BULL.

Bull. Sir, his lordship is just rid out to take the air.

Sir Tun. To take the air! Is that his London breeding, to go take the air when gentlemen come to visit him?

Sir John. 'Tis possible he might want it, he might not be well, some sudden qualm perhaps.

Re-enter Constable, with LORD FOPPINGTON.

Lord Fop. Stap my vitals, I'll have satisfaction!

Sir John. [Running to him.] My dear lord Foppington!

Lord Fop. Dear Friendly, thou art come in the critical minute, strike me dumb!

Sir John. Why, I little thought to have found you in fetters.

Lord Fop. Why truly the world must do me the justice to confess, I do use to appear a little more dégagé: but this old gentleman, not liking the freedom of my air, has been pleased to skewer down my arms like a rabbit.

Sir Tun. Is it then possible that this should be the true Lord Foppington at last?

Lord Fop. Why, what do you see in his face to make you doubt of it? Sir, without presuming to have any extraordinary opinion of my figure, give me leave to tell you, if you had seen as many lords as I have done, you would not think it impossible a person of a worse taille than mine might be a modern man of quality.

Sir Tun. Unbind him, slaves.—My lord, I'm struck dumb, I can only beg pardon by signs; but if a sacrifice will appear you, you shall have it.—Here, pursue this Tartar, bring him back.—Away, I say!—A dog! Oons, I'll cut off his ears a

his tail, I'll draw out all his teeth, pull his skin over his head—and—and what shall I do more?

Sir John. He does indeed deserve to be made an example of.

Lord Fop. He does deserve to be chartre, stap my vitals!

Sir Tun. May I then hope I have your honour's pardon?

Lord Fop. Sir, we courtiers do nothing without a bribe: that fair young lady might do miracles.

Sir Tun. Hoyden! come hither, Hoyden.

Lord Fop. Hoyden is her name, sir?

Sir Tun. Yes, my lord.

Lord Fop. The prettiest name for a song I ever heard.

Sir Tun. My lord—here's my girl, she's yours, she has a wholesome body, and a virtuous mind; she's a woman complete, both in flesh and in spirit; she has a bag of milled crowns, as scarce as they are, and fifteen hundred a year stitched fast to her tail.—So, go thy ways, Hoyden.

Lord Fop. Sir, I do receive her like a gentleman.

Sir Tun. Then, I'm a happyman. I bless Heaven, and if your lordship will give me leave, I will, like a good Christian at Christmas, be very drunk by way of thanksgiving. Come, my noble peer, I believe dinner's ready; if your honour pleases to follow me, I'll lead you on to the attack of a venison-pasty. [*Exit.*]

Lord Fop. Sir, I wait upon you.—Will your ladyship do me the favour of your little finger, madam?

Hoyd. My lord, I'll follow you presently, I have a little business with my nurse.

Lord Fop. Your ladyship's most humble servant.—Come, sir John; the ladies have *des affaires*. [*Exit with SIR JOHN FRIENDLY.*]

Hoyd. So, nurse, we are finely brought to bed! what shall we do now?

Nurse. Ah, dear miss, we are all undone! Mr. Bull, you were used to help a woman to a remedy. [*Crying.*]

Bull. A lack-a-day! but it's past my skill now, I can do nothing.

Nurse. Who would have thought that ever your invention should have been drained so dry?

Hoyd. Well, I have often thought old folks fools, and now I'm sure they are so; I have found a way myself to secure us all.

Nurse. Dear lady, what's that?

Hoyd. Why, if you two will be sure to hold your tongues, and not say a word of what's past, I'll e'en marry this lord too.

Nurse. What! two husbands, my dear?

Hoyd. Why you had three, good nurse, you may hold your tongue.

Nurse. Ay, but not altogether, sweet child.

Hoyd. Psha! if you had, you'd ne'er a thought much on't.

Nurse. Oh, but 'tis a sin, sweeting!

Bull. Nay, that's my business to speak to, nurse.—I do confess, to take two husbands for the satisfaction of the flesh, is to commit the sin of exorbitancy; but to do it for the peace of the spirit, is no more than to be drunk by way of physic. Besides, to prevent a parent's wrath, is to avoid the sin of disobedience; for when the parent's angry, the child is froward. So that upon the whole matter, I do think, though miss should marry again, she may be saved.

Hoyd. Ecod, and I will marry again then! and so there is an end of the story. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT V.

SCENE I.—TOM FASHION'S Lodgings.

Enter COUPLER, TOM FASHION, and LORY.

Coup. Well, and so sir John coming in—

Fash. And so sir John coming in, I thought it might be manners in me to go out, which I did, and getting on horseback as fast as I could, rid away as if the devil had been at the rear of me. What has happened since, Heaven knows.

Coup. Egad, sirrah, I know as well as Heaven *Fash.* What do you know?

Coup. That you are a cuckold.

Fash. The devil I am! By who?

Coup. By your brother.

Fash. My brother! which way?

Coup. The old way; he has lain with your wife.

Fash. Hell and furies! what dost thou mean?

Coup. I mean plainly; I speak no parable.

Fash. Plainly! thou dost not speak common sense, I cannot understand one word thou sayest.

Coup. You will do soon, youngster. In short, you left your wife a widow, and she married again.

Fash. It's a lie.

Coup. Ecod, if I were a young fellow, I'd break your head, sirrah.

Fash. Dear dad, don't be angry, for I'm as mad as Tom of Bedlam.

Coup. When I had fitted you with a wife, you should have kept her.

Fash. But is it possible the young strumpet could play me such a trick?

Coup. A young strumpet, sir, can play twenty tricks.

Fash. But prithee instruct me a little farther; whence comes thy intelligence?

Coup. From your brother, in this letter; there, you may read it.

Fash. [*Reads.*]

DEAR COUPLER,—I have only time to tell thee in three lines, or thereabouts, that here has been the devil. That rascal Tam, having stole the letter thou hadst formerly writ for me to bring to sir Tunbelly, formed a damnable design upon my mistress, and was in a fair way of success when I arrived. But after having suffered some indignities (in which I have all daubed my embroidered coat) I put him to flight. I sent out a party of horse after him, in hopes to have made him my prisoner, which if I had done I would have qualified him for the seraglio, stap my vitals!

The danger I have thus narrowly escaped, has made me fortify myself against further attempts, by entering immediately into an association with

the young lady, by which we engage to stand by one another as long as we both shall live.

In short, the papers are sealed, and the contract is signed, so the business of the lawyer is achevé; but I defer the divine part of the thing till I arrive at London, not being willing to consummate in any other bed but my own.

Postscript,

'Tis possible I may be in the town as soon as this letter, for I find the lady is so violently in love with me, I have determined to make her happy with all the despatch that is practicable, without disordering my coach-horses.

So, here's rare work, i'faith!

Lory. Egad, Miss Hoyden has laid about her bravely!

Coup. I think my country-girl has played her part as well as if she had been born and bred in St. James's parish.

Fash. That rogue the chaplain!

Lory. And then that jade the nurse, sir!

Fash. And then that drunken sot Lory, sir! that could not keep himself sober to be a witness to the marriage.

Lory. Sir—with respect—I know very few drunken sots that do keep themselves sober.

Fash. Hold your prating, sirrah, or I'll break your head!—Dear Coupler, what's to be done?

Coup. Nothing's to be done till the bride and bridegroom come to town.

Fash. Bride and bridegroom! death and furies! I can't bear that thou shouldst call 'em so.

Coup. Why, what shall I call 'em, dog and cat?

Fash. Not for the world, that sounds more like man and wife than t'other.

Coup. Well, if you'll hear of 'em in no language, we'll leave 'em for the nurse and the chaplain.

Fash. The devil and the witch!

Coup. When they come to town—

Lory. We shall have stormy weather.

Coup. Will you hold your tongues, gentlemen, or not?

Lory. Mum!

Coup. I say when they come, we must find what stuff they are made of, whether the churchman be chiefly composed of the flesh, or the spirit; I presume the former. For as chaplains now go, 'tis probable he eats three pound of beef to the reading of one chapter.—This gives him carnal desires, he wants money, preferment, wine, a whore; therefore we must invite him to supper, give him fat capons, sack and sugar, a purse of gold, and a plump sister. Let this be done, and I'll warrant thee, my boy, he speaks truth like an oracle.

Fash. Thou are a profound statesman I allow it; but how shall we gain the nurse?

Coup. Oh! never fear the nurse, if once you have got the priest; for the devil always rides the hag. Well, there's nothing more to be said of the matter at this time, that I know of; so let us go and inquire if there's any news of our people yet, perhaps they may be come. But let me tell you one thing by the way, sirrah, I doubt you have been an idle fellow; if thou hadst behaved thyself as thou shouldst have done, the girl would never have left thee.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—BERINTHIA'S Apartment.

Enter ABIGAIL, crossing the stage, followed by WORTHY.

Wor. Hem, Mrs. Abigail! is your mistress to be spoken with?

Abig. By you, sir, I believe she may.

Wor. Why 'tis by me I would have her spoken with.

Abig. I'll acquaint her, sir.

[*Exit.*]

Wor. One lift more I must persuade her to give me, and then I'm mounted. Well, a young bawd, and a handsome one for my money; 'tis they do the execution; I'll never go to an old one, but when I have occasion for a witch. Lewdness looks heavenly to a woman, when an angel appears in its cause; but when a hag is advocate, she thinks it comes from the devil. An old woman has something so terrible in her looks, that whilst she is persuading your mistress to forget she has a soul, she stares hell and damnation full in her face.

Enter BERINTHIA.

Ber. Well, sir, what news bring you?

Wor. No news, madam; there's a woman going to cuckold her husband.

Ber. Amanda!

Wor. I hope so.

Ber. Speed her well!

Wor. Ay, but there must be more than a God-speed, or your charity won't be worth a farthing.

Ber. Why, han't I done enough already?

Wor. Not quite.

Ber. What's the matter?

Wor. The lady has a scruple still, which you must remove.

Ber. What's that?

Wor. Her virtue—she says.

Ber. And do you believe her?

Wor. No, but I believe it's what she takes for her virtue; it's some relics of lawful love. She is not yet fully satisfied her husband has got another mistress; which unless I can convince her of, I have opened the trenches in vain; for the breach must be wider, before I dare storm the town.

Ber. And so I'm to be your engineer?

Wor. I'm sure you know best how to manage the battery.

Ber. What think you of springing a mine? I have a thought just now come into my head, how to blow her up at once.

Wor. That would be a thought indeed.

Ber. Faith, I'll do't; and thus the execution of it shall be. We are all invited to my lord Foppington's to-night to supper; he's come to town with his bride, and maketh a ball, with an entertainment of music. Now, you must know, my undoer here, Loveless, says he must needs meet me about some private business (I don't know what 'tis) before we go to the company. To which end he has told his wife one lie, and I have told her another. But to make her amends, I'll go immediately, and tell her a solemn truth.

Wor. What's that?

Ber. Why, I'll tell her, that to my certain knowledge her husband has a rendezvous with his mistress this afternoon; and that if she'll give me her word, she will be satisfied with the discovery, without making any violent inquiry after the woman, I'll direct her to a place where she shall see 'em

meet. Now, friend, this I fancy may help you to a critical minute. For home she must go again to dress. You (with your good breeding) come to wait upon us to the ball, find her all alone, her spirit inflamed against her husband for his treason, and her flesh in a heat from some contemplations upon the treachery, her blood on a fire, her conscience in ice; a lover to draw, and the devil to drive.—Ah, poor Amanda!

Wor. [*Kneeling.*] Thou angel of light, let me fall down and adore thee!

Ber. Thou minister of darkness, get up again, for I hate to see the devil at his devotions.

Wor. Well, my incomparable Berinthia, how shall I requite you!

Ber. Oh, ne'er trouble yourself about that: virtue is its own reward. There's a pleasure in doing good, which sufficiently pays itself. Adieu!

Wor. Farewell, thou best of women!

[*Exeunt severally.*]

Enter AMANDA meeting BERTHIA.

Aman. Who was that went from you?

Ber. A friend of yours.

Aman. What does he want?

Ber. Something you might spare him, and be ne'er the poorer.

Aman. I can spare him nothing but my friendship; my love already's all disposed of: though, I confess, to one ungrateful to my bounty.

Ber. Why, there's the mystery! You have been so bountiful, you have cloyed him. Fond wives do by their husbands, as barren wives do by their lapdogs; cram 'em with sweetmeats till they spoil their stomachs.

Aman. Alas! had you but seen how passionately fond he has been since our last reconciliation, you would have thought it were impossible he ever should have breathed an hour without me.

Ber. Ay, but there you thought wrong again, Amanda; you should consider, that in matters of love men's eyes are always bigger than their bellies. They have violent appetites, 'tis true, but they have soon dined.

Aman. Well; there's nothing upon earth astonishes me more than men's inconstancy.

Ber. Now there's nothing upon earth astonishes me less, when I consider what they and we are composed of: for nature has made them children, and us babies. Now, Amanda, how we used our babies you may remember. We were mad to have them as soon as we saw them; kissed them to pieces as soon as we got them; then pulled off their clothes, saw them naked, and so threw them away.

Aman. But do you think all men are of this temper?

Ber. All but one.

Aman. Who's that?

Ber. Worthy.

Aman. Why, he's weary of his wife too, you see.

Ber. Ay, that's no proof.

Aman. What can be a greater?

Ber. Being weary of his mistress.

Aman. Don't you think 'twere possible he might give you that too?

Ber. Perhaps he might, if he were my gallant; not if he were yours.

Aman. Why do you think he should be more

constant to me than he would to you? I'm sure I'm not so handsome.

Ber. Kissing goes by favour; he likes you best.

Aman. Suppose he does: that's no demonstration he would be constant to me.

Ber. No, that I'll grant you: but there are other reasons to expect it. For you must know after all, Amanda, the inconstancy we commonly see in men of brains, does not so much proceed from the uncertainty of their temper, as from the misfortunes of their love. A man sees perhaps a hundred women he likes well enough for an intrigue, and away; but possibly, through the whole course of his life, does not find above one who is exactly what he could wish her: now her, 'tis a thousand to one, he never gets. Either she is not to be had at all (though that seldom happens, you'll say), or he wants those opportunities that are necessary to gain her; either she likes somebody else much better than him, or uses him like a dog, because he likes nobody so well as her. Still something or other Fate claps in the way between them and the women they are capable of being fond of: and this makes them wander about from mistress to mistress, like a pilgrim from town to town, who every night must have a fresh lodging, and's in haste to be gone in the morning.

Aman. 'Tis possible there may be something in what you say; but what do you infer from it as to the man we are talking of?

Ber. Why, I infer, that you being the woman in the world the most to his humour, 'tis not likely he would quit you for one that is less.

Aman. That is not to be depended upon, for you see Mr. Loveless does so.

Ber. What does Mr. Loveless do?

Aman. Why, he runs after something for variety I'm sure he does not like so well as he does me.

Ber. That's more than you know, madam.

Aman. No, I'm sure on't. I am not very vain, Berinthia, and yet I'll lay my life, if I could look into his heart, he thinks I deserve to be preferred to a thousand of her.

Ber. Don't be too positive in that neither; a million to one but she has the same opinion of you. What would you give to see her?

Aman. Hang her, dirty trull!—Though I really believe she's so ugly she'd cure me of my jealousy.

Ber. All the men of sense about town say she's handsome.

Aman. They are as often out in those things as any people.

Ber. Then I'll give you further proof—all the women about town say she's a fool. Now I hope you're convinced?

Aman. Whate'er she be, I'm satisfied he does not like her well enough to bestow anything more than a little outward gallantry upon her.

Ber. Outward gallantry!—[*Aside.*] I can't bear this.—[*Aloud.*] Don't you think she's a woman to be fobbed off so. Come, I'm too much your friend to suffer you should be thus grossly imposed upon by a man who does not deserve the least part about you, unless he knew how to set a greater value upon it. Therefore, in one word, to my certain knowledge, he is to meet her now, within a quarter of an hour, somewhere about that Babylon of wickedness, Whitehall. And if you'll give me your word, that you'll be content with

seeing her masked in his hand, without pulling her headclothes off, I'll step immediately to the person from whom I have my intelligence, and send you word whereabouts you may stand to see 'em meet. My friend and I'll watch 'em from another place, and dodge 'em to their private lodging; but don't you offer to follow 'em, lest you do it awkwardly, and spoil all. I'll come home to you again as soon as I have earthed 'em, and give you an account in what corner of the house the scene of their lewdness lies.

Aman. If you can do this, Berinthia, he's a villain.

Ber. I can't help that; men will be so.

Aman. Well, I'll follow your directions, for I shall never rest till I know the worst of this matter.

Ber. Pray, go immediately and get yourself ready then. Put on some of your woman's clothes, a great scarf and a mask, and you shall presently receive orders.—[*Calls.*] Here, who's there? get me a chair quickly.

Enter Servant.

Ser. There are chairs at the door, madam.

Ber. 'Tis well; I'm coming. [*Exit Servant.*]

Aman. But pray, Berinthia, before you go, tell me how I may know this filthy thing, if she should be so forward (as I suppose she will) to come to the rendezvous first; for methinks I would fain view her a little.

Ber. Why, she's about my height; and very well shaped.

Aman. I thought she had been a little crooked?

Ber. O no, she's as straight as I am. But we lose time; come away. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.—TOM FASHION'S Lodgings.

Enter TOM FASHION, meeting LORY.

Fash. Well, will the doctor come?

Lory. Sir, I sent a porter to him as you ordered me. He found him with a pipe of tobacco and a great tankard of ale, which he said he would despatch while I could tell three, and be here.

Fash. He does not suspect 'twas I that sent for him?

Lory. Not a jot, sir; he divines as little for himself as he does for other folks.

Fash. Will he bring nurse with him?

Lory. Yes.

Fash. That's well; where's the Coupler?

Lory. He's half way up the stairs taking breath; he must play his bellows a little, before he can get to the top.

Enter Coupler.

Fash. Oh here he is.—Well, Old Phthisic, the doctor's coming.

Coup. Would the pox had the doctor!—I'm quite out of wind.—[*To LORY.*] Set me a chair, sirrah. Ah!—[*Sits down.*]—[*To TOM FASHION.*] Why the plague canst not thou lodge upon the ground-floor?

Fash. Because I love to lie as near heaven as I can.

Coup. Prithee, let heaven alone; ne'er affect tending that way: thy centre's downwards.

Fash. That's impossible! I have too much ill luck in this world to be damned in the next.

Coup. Thou art out in thy logic. Thy major is

true, but thy minor is false; for thou art the luckiest fellow in the universe.

Fash. Make out that.

Coup. I'll do't: last night the devil ran away with the parson of Fatgoose living.

Fash. If he had run away with the parish too, what's that to me?

Coup. I'll tell thee what it's to thee.—This living is worth five hundred pounds a-year, and the presentation of it is thine, if thou canst prove thyself a lawful husband to Miss Hoyden.

Fash. Sayest thou so, my protector? Then, egad, I shall have a brace of evidences here presently.

Coup. The nurse and the doctor?

Fash. The same. The devil himself won't have interest enough to make 'em withstand it.

Coup. That we shall see presently.—Here they come.

Enter Nurse and BULL; they start back, seeing TOM FASHION.

Nurse. Ah, goodness, Roger, we are betrayed!

Fash. [*Laying hold of them.*] Nay, nay, ne'er flinch for the matter, for I have you safe.—Come to your trials immediately; I have no time to give you copies of your indictment. There sits your judge.

Both. [*Kneeling.*] Pray, sir, have compassion on us.

Nurse. I hope, sir, my years will move your pity; I am an aged woman.

Coup. That is a moving argument indeed.—[*To BULL.*] Are not you a rogue of sanctity?

Bull. Sir (with respect to my function), I do wear a gown. I hope, sir, my character will be considered; I am Heaven's ambassador.

Coup. Did not you marry this vigorous young fellow to a plump young buxom wench?

Nurse. [*Aside to BULL.*] Don't confess, Roger, unless you are hard put to it indeed.

Coup. Come, out with't!—Now is he chewing the cud of his roguery, and grinding a lie between his teeth.

Bull. Sir, I cannot positively say—I say, sir, positively I cannot say—

Coup. Come, no equivocation, no Roman turns upon us. Consider thou standest upon protestant ground, which will slip from under thee like a Tyburn cart; for in this country we have always ten hangmen for one Jesuit.

Bull. [*To TOM FASHION.*] Pray, sir, then will you but permit me to speak one word in private with nurse?

Fash. Thou art always for doing something in private with nurse.

Coup. But pray let his betters be served before him for once: I would do something in private with her myself.—Lory, take care of this reverend gownman in the next room a little.—Retire, priest.—[*Exit LORY with BULL.*] Now, virgin, I must put the matter home to you a little: do you think it might not be possible to make you speak truth?

Nurse. Alas, sir! I don't know what you mean by truth.

Coup. Nay, 'tis possible thou mayest be a stranger to it.

Fash. Come, nurse, you and I were better friends when we saw one another last; and I still believe you are a very good woman in the bottom. I did deceive you and your young lady, 'tis true,

but I always designed to make a very good husband to her, and to be a very good friend to you. And 'tis possible, in the end, she might have found herself happier, and you richer, than ever my brother will make you.

Nurse. Brother! why is your worship then his lordship's brother?

Fash. I am; which you should have known, if I durst have stayed to have told you; but I was forced to take horse a little in haste, you know.

Nurse. You were indeed, sir: poor young man, how he was bound to scaure for't! Now won't your worship be angry, if I confess the truth to you?—When I found you were a cheat (with respect be 'it spoken), I verily believed miss had got some pitiful skip-jack varlet or other to her husband, or I had ne'er let her think of marrying again.

Coup. But where was your conscience all this while, woman? did not that stare you in the face with huge saucer-eyes, and a great horn upon the forehead? Did not you think you should be damned for such a sin?—Ha!

Fash. Well said, divinity! press that home upon her.

Nurse. Why, in good truly, sir, I had some fearful thoughts on't, and could never be brought to consent, till Mr. Bull said it was a peckadilla, and he'd secure my soul for a tithe-pig.

Fash. There was a rogue for you!

Coup. And he shall thrive accordingly; he shall have a good living.—Come, honest nurse, I see you have butter in your compound; you can melt. Some compassion you can have of this handsome young fellow.

Nurse. I have, indeed, sir.

Fash. Why, then I'll tell you what you shall do for me. You know what a warm living here is fallen; and that it must be in the disposal of him who has the disposal of miss. Now if you and the doctor will agree to prove my marriage, I'll present him to it, upon condition he makes you his bride.

Nurse. Now the blessing of the Lord follow your good worship both by night and by day!—Let him be fetched in by the ears; I'll soon bring his nose to the grindstone.

Coup. [*Aside.*] Well said, old white-leather! —[*Aloud.*] Hey, bring in the prisoner there!

Re-enter LORY with BULL.

Coup. Come, advance, holy man. Here's your duck does not think fit to retire with you into the chancel at this time; but she has a proposal to make to you in the face of the congregation.—Come, nurse, speak for yourself, you are of age.

Nurse. Roger, are not you a wicked man, Roger, to set your strength against a weak woman, and persuade her it was no sin to conceal miss's nuptials? My conscience flies in my face for it, thou priest of Baal! and I find by woful experience thy absolution is not worth an old cassock; therefore I am resolved to confess the truth to the whole world, though I die a beggar for it. But his worship overflows with his mercy and his bounty; he is not only pleased to forgive us our sins, but designs thou sha't squat thee down in Fatgoose living; and which is more than all, has prevailed with me to become the wife of thy bosom.

Fash. All this I intend for you, doctor. What you are to do for me I need not tell ye.

Bull. Your worship's goodness is unspeakable. Yet there is one thing seems a point of conscience; and conscience is a tender babe. If I should bind myself, for the sake of this living, to marry nurse, and maintain her afterwards, I doubt it might be looked on as a kind of simony.

Coup. [*Rising up.*] If it were sacrilege, the living's worth it: therefore no more words, good doctor; but with the parish—[*Giving Nurse to him*] here—take the parsonage-house. 'Tis true, 'tis a little out of repair; some dilapidations there are to be made good; the windows are broke, the wainscot is warped, the ceilings are peeled, and the walls are cracked; but a little glazing, painting, whitewash, and plaster, will make it last thy time.

Bull. Well, sir, if it must be so, I shan't contend. What Providence orders, I submit to.

Nurse. And so do I, with all humility.

Coup. Why, that now was spoke like good people. Come, my turtle-doves, let us go help this poor pigeon to his wandering mate again; and after institution and induction, you shall all go a-cooing together. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.—LOVELESS's Lodgings.

Enter AMANDA in a scarf, &c., as just returned, her Maid following her.

Aman. Prithce what care I who has been here?

Maid. Madam, 'twas my lady Bridle and my Lady Tiptoe.

Aman. My lady Fiddle and my lady Faddle! What dost stand troubling me with the visits of a parcel of impertinent women! When they are well seamed with the small-pox, they won't be so fond of showing their faces.—There are more coquettes about this town—

Maid. Madam, I suppose they only came to return your ladyship's visit, according to the custom of the world.

Aman. Would the world were on fire, and you in the middle on't! Begone! leave me!—[*Exit Maid.*] At last I am convinced. My eyes are testimonies of his falsehood. The base, ungrateful, perjured villain!—

Good gods! what slippery stuff are men composed of!

Sure the account of their creation's false, And 'twas the woman's rat that they were form'd of. But why am I thus angry?

This poor relapse should only move my scorn.

'Tis true,

The roving flights of his unfinish'd youth
Had strong excuses from the plea of nature;
Reason had thrown the reins loose on his neck,
And slipp'd him to unlimited desire.

If therefore he went wrong, he had a claim

To my forgiveness, and I did him right.

But since the years of manhood rein him in,

And reason, well digested into thought,

Has pointed out the course he ought to run;

If now he strays,

'Twould be as weak and mean in me to pardon,

As it has been in him to offend. But hold:

'Tis an ill cause indeed, where nothing's to be said for't.

My beauty possibly is in the wane;

Perhaps sixteen has greater charms for him :
Yes, there's the secret. But let him know,
My quiver's not entirely emptied yet,
I still have darts, and I can shoot 'em too ;
They're not so blunt, but they can enter still :
The want's not in my power, but in my will.
Virtue's his friend ; or, through another's heart,
I yet could find the way to make his smart.

[Going off, she meets WORTHY.]

Ha ! he here !
Protect me, Heaven ! for this looks ominous.

Enter WORTHY.

Wor. You seem disorder'd, madam,
I hope there's no misfortune happen'd to you ?

Aman. None that will long disorder me, I hope.

Wor. Whate'er it be disturbs you, would to
'Twere in my power to bear the pain, [heaven !]
Till I were able to remove the cause.

Aman. I hope ere long it will remove itself.
At least, I have given it warning to be gone.

Wor. Would I durst ask, where 'tis the thorn
torments you !

Forgive me, if I grow inquisitive ;
'Tis now with desire to give you ease.

Aman. Alas ! 'tis in a tender part.

It can't be drawn without a world of pain :
Yet out it must ;

For it begins to fester in my heart.

Wor. If 'tis the sting of unrequited love,
Remove it instantly :

I have a balm will quickly heal the wound.

Aman. You'll find the undertaking difficult :
The surgeon, who already has attempted it,
Has much tormented me.

Wor. I'll aid him with a gentler hand,
If you will give me leave.

Aman. How soft soe'er the hand may be,
There still is terror in the operation.

Wor. Some few preparatives would make it easy,
Could I persuade you to apply 'em.

Make home reflections, madam, on your slighted love :
Weigh well the strength and beauty of your charms :
Rouse up that spirit women ought to bear,
And slight your god, if he neglects his angel.
With arms of ice receive his cold embraces,
And keep your fire for those who come in flames.
Behold a burning lover at your feet,
His fever raging in his veins !

See how he trembles, how he pants !
See how he glows, how he consumes !
Extend the arms of mercy to his aid ;
His zeal may give him title to your pity,
Although his merit cannot claim your love.

Aman. Of all my feeble sex, sure I must be the
weakest,

Should I again presume to think on love. [Sighing.]
Alas ! my heart has been too roughly treated.

Wor. 'Twill find the greater bliss in softer usage.

Aman. But where's that usage to be found ?

Wor. 'Tis here,

Within this faithful breast ; which if you doubt,
I'll rip it up before your eyes ;
Lay all its secrets open to your view ;
And then, you'll see 'twas sound.

Aman. With just such words,
Honest as these, the worst of men deceived me.

Wor. He therefore merits all revenge can do ;
His fault is such,
The extent and stretch of vengeance cannot reach it.

Oh ! make me but your instrument of justice ;
You'll find me execute it with such zeal,
As shall convince you I abhor the crime.

Aman. The rigour of an executioner,
Has more the face of cruelty than justice :
And he who puts the cord about the wretch's neck,
Is seldom known to exceed him in his morals.

Wor. What proof then can I give you of my
Aman. There is on earth but one. [truth ?]

Wor. And is that in my power ?
Aman. It is :

And one that would so thoroughly convince me,
I should be apt to rate your heart so high,
I possibly might purchase't with a part of mine.

Wor. Then heaven thou art my friend, and I
am blest ;

For if 'tis in my power, my will I'm sure
Will reach it. No matter what the terms
May be, when such a recompense is offer'd.
Oh ! tell me quickly what this proof must be !
What is it will convince you of my love ?

Aman. I shall believe you love me as you ought,
If from this moment you forbear to ask
Whatever is unfit for me to grant.—

You pause upon it, sir.—I doubt, on such hard
terms,

A woman's heart is scarcely worth the having.

Wor. A heart, like yours, on any terms is
worth it ;

'Twas not on that I paused. But I was thinking
[Drawing nearer to her.]

Whether some things there may not be,
Which women cannot grant without a blush,
And yet which men may take without offence.

[Taking her hand.]

Your hand, I fancy, may be of the number :
Oh, pardon me ! if I commit a rape

[Kissing it eagerly.]

Upon't ; and thus devour it with my kisses.

Aman. O heavens ! let me go.

Wor. Never, whilst I have strength to hold you
here. [Forcing her to sit down on a couch.]

My life, my soul, my goddess—Oh, forgive me !

Aman. O whither am I going ? Help, heaven,
or I am lost.

Wor. Stand neuter, gods, this once, I do invoke
you.

Aman. Then, save me, virtue, and the glory's

Wor. Nay, never strive. [thine.]

Aman. I will and conquer too.

My forces rally bravely to my aid.

[Breaking from him.]

And thus I gain the day.

Wor. Then mine as bravely double their attack ;

[Seizing her again.]

And thus I wrest it from you. Nay, struggle not ;
For all's in vain : or death or victory ;
I am determined.

Aman. And so am I :

[Rushing from him.]

Now keep your distance, or we part for ever.

Wor. [Offering again.] For Heaven's sake !—

Aman. [Going.] Nay then, farewell !

Wor. Oh stay ! and see the magic force of love.

[Kneeling, and holding by her clothes.]

Behold this raging lion at your feet,
Struck dead with fear, and tame as charms can
make him.

What must I do to be forgiven by you ?

Aman. Repent, and never more offend.

Wor. Repentance for past crimes is just and easy;
But sin no more's a task too hard for mortals.

Aman. Yet those who hope for heaven,
Must use their best endeavours to perform it.
Wor. Endeavours we may use, but flesh and blood are got

In t'other scale; and they are ponderous things.

Aman. Whate'er they are, there is a weight in resolution

Sufficient for their balance. The soul, I do confess,
Is usually so careless of its charge,
So soft, and so indulgent to desire,
It leaves the reins in the wild hand of nature,
Who like a Phaeton, drives the fiery chariot,
And sets the world on flame.

Yet still the sovereignty is in the mind,
Whene'er it pleases to exert its force.
Perhaps you may not think it worth your while,
To take such mighty pains for my esteem;
But that I leave to you.

You see the price I set upon my heart;
Perhaps 'tis dear: but, spite of all your art,
You'll find on cheaper terms we ne'er shall part.

[*Exit.*]

Wor. Sure there's divinity about her!
And sh'as dispensed some portion on't to me.
For what but now was the wild flame of love,
Or (to dissect that specious term) the vile,
The gross desires of flesh and blood,
Is in a moment turn'd to adoration.
The coarser appetite of nature's gone, and 'tis,
Methinks, the food of angels I require.
How long this influence may last, Heaven knows;
But in this moment of my purity,
I could on her own terms accept her heart.
Yes, lovely woman! I can accept it.
For now 'tis doubly worth my care.
Your charms are much increased, since thus adorn'd.

When truth's extorted from us, then we own
The robe of virtue is a graceful habit.
Could women but our secret counsels scan,
Could they but reach the deep reserves of man,
They'd wear it on, that that of love might last;
For when they throw off one, we soon the other
Their sympathy is such— [cast.
The fate of one, the other scarce can fly;
They live together, and together die. [Exit.

SCENE V.—A Room in Lord FOPPINGTON'S House.

Enter Miss HOYDEN and Nurse.

Hoyd. But is it sure and certain, say you, he's my lord's own brother?

Nurse. As sure as he's your lawful husband.

Hoyd. Ecod, if I had known that in time, I don't know but I might have kept him: for, between you and I, nurse, he'd have made a husband worth two of this I have. But which do you think you should fancy most, nurse?

Nurse. Why, truly, in my poor fancy, madam, your first husband is the prettier gentleman.

Hoyd. I don't like my lord's shapes, nurse.

Nurse. Why, in good truly, as a body may say, he is but a slam.

Hoyd. What do you think now he puts me in mind of? Don't you remember a long, loose, shambling sort of a horse my father call'd Washy?

Nurse. As like as two twin-brothers!

Hoyd. Ecod, I have thought so a hundred times: faith, I'm tired of him.

Nurse. Indeed, madam, I think you had e'en as good stand to your first bargain.

Hoyd. Oh but, nurse, we han't considered the main thing yet. If I leave my lord, I must leave my lady too; and when I rattle about the streets in my coach, they'll only say, There goes mistress—mistress—mistress what? What's this man's name I have married, nurse?

Nurse. 'Squire Fashion.

Hoyd. 'Squire Fashion is it?—Well, 'Squire, that's better than nothing. Do you think one could not get him made a knight, nurse?

Nurse. I don't know but one might, madam, when the king's in a good humour.

Hoyd. Ecod, that would do rarely. For then he'd be as good a man as my father, you know.

Nurse. By'r Lady, and that's as good as the best of 'em.

Hoyd. So 'tis, faith; for then I shall be my lady, and your ladyship at every word, that's all I have to care for. Ha, nurse, but hark you me, one thing more, and then I have done. I'm afraid, if I change my husband again, I shan't have so much money to throw about, nurse.

Nurse. Oh, enough's as good as a feast. Besides, madam, one don't know but as much may fall to your share with the younger brother as with the elder. For though these lords have a power of wealth indeed, yet, as I have heard say, they give it all to their sluts and their trulls; who joggle it about in their coaches, with a murrain to 'em! whilst poor madam sits sighing, and wishing, and knotting, and crying, and has not a spare half-crown to buy her a *Practice of Piety*.

Hoyd. Oh, but for that don't deceive yourself, nurse. For this I must say for my lord, and a— [Snapping her fingers] for him; he's as free as an open house at Christmas. For this very morning he told me I should have two hundred a year to buy pins. Now, nurse, if he gives me two hundred a year to buy pins, what do you think he'll give me to buy fine petticoats?

Nurse. Ah, my dearest, he deceives thee faultily, and he's no better than a rogue for his pains! These Londoners have got a gibberidge with 'em would confound a gipsy. That which they call pin-money is to buy their wives everything in the varsal world, down to their very shoe-ties. Nay, I have heard folks say, that some ladies, if they will have gallants, as they call 'em, are forced to find them out of their pin-money too.

Hoyd. Has he served me so, say ye!—Then I'll be his wife no longer, that's fixed. Look, here he comes, with all the fine folks at's heels. Ecod, nurse, these London ladies will laugh till they crack again, to see me slip my collar, and run away from my husband. But, d'ye hear? Pray, take care of one thing: when the business comes to break out, be sure you get between me and my father, for you know his tricks; he'll knock me down.

Nurse. I'll mind him, ne'er fear, madam.

Enter Lord FOPPINGTON, LOVELESS, WORTHY, AMANDA, and BERINTIA.

Lord Fop. Ladies and gentlemen, you are all welcome.—Loveless, that's my wife; prithee do me the favour to salute her; and dost hear,—[*Aside*

to him] if thou hast a mind to try thy fortune, to be revenged of me, I won't take it ill, stap my vitals!

Love. You need not fear, sir; I'm too fond of my own wife to have the least inclination to yours.

[*All salute Miss HOYDEN.*]

Lord Fop. [*Aside.*] I'd give a thousand pound he would make love to her, that he may see she has sense enough to prefer me to him, though his own wife has not.—[*Viewing him.*] He's a very beastly fellow, in my opinion.

Hoyd. [*Aside.*] What a power of fine men there are in this London! He that kissed me first is a goodly gentleman, I promise you. Sure those wives have a rare time on't that live here always.

Enter Sir TUNBELLY CLUMSEY, with Musicians, Dancers, &c.

Sir Tun. Come, come in, good people, come in! Come tune your fiddles, tune your fiddles! —[*To the haultboys.*] Bagpipes, make ready there. Come, strike up.

[*Sings.*]

For this is Hoyden's wedding-day,

And therefore we keep holiday,

And come to be merry.

Ha! there's my wench, I'faith. Touch and take, I'll warrant her; she'll breed like a tame rabbit.

Hoyd. [*Aside.*] Ecod, I think my father's gotten drunk before supper.

Sir Tun. [*To LOVELESS and WORTHY.*] Gentlemen, you are welcome.—[*Saluting AMANDA and BERINTIA.*] Ladies, by your leave.—[*Aside.*] Ha! they bill like turtles. Udsookers, they set my old blood a-fire; I shall cuckold somebody before morning.

Lord Fop. [*To Sir TUNBELLY.*] Sir, you being master of the entertainment, will you desire the company to sit?

Sir Tun. Oons, sir, I'm the happiest man on this side the Ganges!

Lord Fop. [*Aside.*] This is a mighty unaccountable old fellow.—[*To Sir TUNBELLY.*] I said, sir, it would be convenient to ask the company to sit.

Sir Tun. Sit!—with all my heart.—Come, take your places, ladies; take your places, gentlemen.—Come sit down, sit down; a pox of ceremony! take your places.

[*They sit, and the masque begins.*]

Enter CUPID and HYMEN, with a Chorus of Dancers.

Cup. Thou bane to my empire, thou spring of contest,

Thou source of all discord, thou period to rest, Instruct me, what wretches in bondage can see, That the aim of their life is still pointed to thee.

Hym. Instruct me, thou little, impertinent god, From whence all thy subjects have taken the mode To grow fond of a change, to whatever it be, And I'll tell thee why those would be bound who are free.

Chorus.

For change, we're for change, to whatever it be,
We are neither contented with freedom nor thee.

Constancy's an empty sound,
Heaven, and earth, and all go round,
All the works of Nature move,
All the joys of life and love
Are in variety.

Cup. Were love the reward of a pains-taking life,

Had a husband the art to be fond of his wife,
Were virtue so plenty, a wife could afford,
These very hard times, to be true to her lord,
Some specious account might be given of those
Who are tied by the tail, to be led by the nose.

But since 'tis the fate of a man and his wife,
To consume all their days in contention and strife;
Since, whatever the bounty of Heaven may create
her,

He's morally sure he shall heartily hate her,
I think 'twere much wiser to ramble at large,
And the volleys of love on the herd to discharge.

Hym. Some colour of reason thy counsel might bear,

Could a man have no more than his wife to his share:

Or were I a monarch so cruelly just,
To oblige a poor wife to be true to her trust;
But I have not pretended, for many years past,
By marrying of people, to make 'em grow chaste.

I therefore advise thee to let me go on,
Thou'lt find I'm the strength and support of thy throne;

For hadst thou but eyes, thou wouldst quickly perceive it,

How smoothly the dart

Slips into the heart

Of a woman that's wed;

Whilst the shivering maid

Stands trembling, and wishing, but dare not receive it.

Chorus.

For change, we're for change, to whatever it be,
We are neither contented with freedom nor thee.

Constancy's an empty sound,
Heaven, and earth, and all go round,
All the works of Nature move,
And the joys of life and love
Are in variety.

[*End of the masque.*]

Sir Tun. So; very fine, very fine, i'faith! this is something like a wedding. Now, if supper were but ready I'd say a short grace; and if I had such a bedfellow as Hoyden to-night—I'd say as short prayers.

Enter TOM FASHION, COUPLER, and BULL.

How now!—what have we got here? a ghost! Nay, it must be so, for his flesh and blood could never have dared to appear before me.—[*To TOM FASHION.*] Ah, rogue!

Lord Fop. Stap my vitals, Tam again!

Sir Tun. My lord, will you cut his throat? or shall I?

Lord Fop. Leave him to me, sir, if you please.—Prithee, Tam, be so ingenious now as to tell me what thy business is here?

Fash. 'Tis with your bride.

Lord Fop. Thou art the impudentest fellow that Nature has yet spawned into the world, strike me speechless!

Fash. Why, you know my modesty would have starved me; I sent it a-begging to you, and you would not give it a groat.

Lord Fop. And dost thou expect by an excess of assurance to extort a maintenance from me?

Fash. [*Taking Miss HOYDEN by the hand.*] I do intend to extort your mistress from you, and that I hope will prove one.

Lord Fop. I ever thought Newgate or Bedlam would be his fortune, and now his fate's decided.—Prithee, Loveless, dost know of ever a mad-doctor hard by?

Fash. There's one at your elbow will cure you presently.—[*To BULL.*] Prithee, doctor, take him in hand quickly.

Lord Fop. Shall I beg the favour of you, sir, to pull your fingers out of my wife's hand?

Fash. His wife! Look you there; now I hope you are all satisfied he's mad.

Lord Fop. Now, it is not possible far me to penetrate what species of folly it is thou art driving at!

Sir Tun. Here, here, here, let me beat out his brains, and that will decide all.

Lord Fop. No, pray, sir, hold, we'll destroy him presently according to law.

Fash. [*To BULL.*] Nay, then advance, doctor: come, you are a man of conscience, answer boldly to the questions I shall ask. Did not you marry me to this young lady before ever that gentleman there saw her face?

Bull. Since the truth must out, I did.

Fash. Nurse, sweet nurse, were not you a witness to it?

Nurse. Since my conscience bids me speak—I was.

Fash. [*To Miss HOYDEN.*] Madam, am not I your lawful husband?

Hoyd. Truly I can't tell, but you married me first.

Fash. Now I hope you are all satisfied?

Sir Tun. [*Offering to strike him, is held by LOVELESS and WORTHY.*] Oons and thunder, you lie!

Lord Fop. Pray, sir, be calm, the battle is in disorder, but requires more conduct than courage to rally our forces.—Pray, dactar, one word with you.—[*Aside to BULL.*] Look you, sir, though I will not presume to calculate your notions of damnation from the description you give us of hell, yet since there is at least a passibility you may have a pitchfork thrust in your backside, methinks it should not be worth your while to risk your soul in the next world for the sake of a beggarly younger brather, who is not able to make your body happy in this.

Bull. Alas! my lord, I have no worldly ends; I speak the truth, Heaven knows.

Lord Fop. Nay, prithee, never engage Heaven in the matter, for by all I can see 'tis like to prove a business for the devil.

Fash. Come, pray sir, all above-board, no corrupting of evidences. If you please, this young lady is my lawful wife, and I'll justify it in all the courts of England; so your lordship (who always had a passion for variety) may go seek a new mistress if you think fit.

Lord Fop. I am struck dumb with his impudence, and cannot passively tell whether ever I shall speak again or not.

Sir Tun. Then let me come and examine the business a little, I'll jerk the truth out of 'em presently. Here, give me my dog-whip.

Fash. Look you, old gentleman, 'tis in vain to make a noise; if you grow mutinous, I have some

friends within call have swords by their sides above four foot long; therefore be calm, hear the evidence patiently, and when the jury have given their verdict, pass sentence according to law. Here's honest Coupler shall be foreman, and ask as many questions as he pleases.

Coup. All I have to ask is, whether nurse persists in her evidence? The parson, I dare swear, will never flinch from his.

Nurse. [*To Sir TUNBELLY, kneeling.*] I hope in heaven your worship will pardon me: I have served you long and faithfully, but in this thing I was overreached; your worship, however, was deceived as well as I, and if the wedding-dinner had been ready, you had put madam to bed with him with your own hands.

Sir Tun. But how durst you do this, without acquainting of me?

Nurse. Alas! if your worship had seen how the poor thing begged, and prayed, and clung, and twined about me, like ivy to an old wall, you would say, I who had suckled it, and swaddled it, and nursed it both wet and dry, must have had a heart of adamant to refuse it.

Sir Tun. Very well!

Fash. Foreman, I expect your verdict.

Coup. Ladies and gentlemen, what's your opinions?

All. A clear case! a clear case!

Coup. Then, my young folks, I wish you joy.

Sir Tun. [*To TOM FASHION.*] Come hither, stripling; if it be true then, that thou hast married my daughter, prithee tell me who thou art?

Fash. Sir, the best of my condition is, I am your son-in-law; and the worst of it is, I am brother to that noble peer there.

Sir Tun. Art thou brother to that noble peer!—Why, then, that noble peer, and thee, and thy wife, and the nurse, and the priest—may all go and be damned together! [*Exit.*]

Lord Fop. [*Aside.*] Now, for my part, I think the wisest thing a man can do with an aching heart is to put on a serene countenance; for a philosophical air is the most becoming thing in the world to the face of a person of quality. I will therefore bear my disgrace like a great man, and let the people see I am above an affront.—[*Aloud.*] Dear Tam, since things are thus fallen out, prithee give me leave to wish thee jay; I do it *de bon cœur*, strike me dumb! You have married a woman beautiful in her person, charming in her airs, prudent in her conduct, constant in her inclinations, and of a nice morality, split my windpipe!

Fash. Your lordship may keep up your spirits with your grimace if you please, I shall support mine with this lady, and two thousand pound a-year.—[*Taking Miss HOYDEN's hand.*] Come, madam:—

We once again, you see, are man and wife, And now, perhaps, the bargain's struck for life. If I mistake, and we should part again, At least you see you may have choice of men: Nay, should the war at length such havoc make, That lovers should grow scarce, yet for your sake, Kind Heaven always will preserve a beau:

[*Pointing to Lord FOPINGTON.* You'll find his lordship ready to come to.

Lord Fop. Her ladyship shall stap my vitals if I do.

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

EPILOGUE,

SPOKEN BY LORD FOPPINGTON.

Gentlemen and Ladies,
 THESE people have regaled you here to-day
 (In my opinion) with a saucy play ;
 In which the author does presume to show,
 That coxcomb, *ab origine*—was beau.
 Truly I think the thing of so much weight,
 That if some sharp chastisement ben't his fate,
 Gad's curse ! it may in time destroy the state.
 I hold no one its friend, I must confess,
 Who would discauntenance you men of dress.
 Far, give me leave to absolve, good clothes are things
 Have ever been of great support to kings ;
 All treasons come from slovens, it is nat
 Within the reach of gentle beaux to plat ;
 They have no gall, no spleen, no teeth, no stings,
 Of all Gad's creatures, the most harmless things.
 Through all recard, no prince was ever slain,
 By one who had a feather in his brain.

They're men of too refined an education,
 To squabble with a court—for a vile dirty nation.
 I'm very pasitive you never saw
 A through republican a finish'd beau.
 Nor, truly, shall you very often see
 A Jacobite much better dress'd than he ;
 In shart, through all the courts that I have been in,
 Your men of mischief—still are in faul linen.
 Did ever one yet dance the Tyburn jig,
 With a free air, or a well-pawder'd wig ?
 Did ever highwaymen yet bid you stand,
 With a sweet bawdy snuffbox in his hand ?
 Ar do you ever find they ask your purse
 As men of breeding do ?—Ladies, Gad's curse !
 This author is a dag, and 'tis not fit
 You should allow him even one grain of wit :
 To which, that his pretence may ne'er be named,
 My humble motion is—he may be damn'd.

THE PROVOKED WIFE.

A Comedy.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

CONSTANT, } *Gentlemen of the Town.*
HEARTFREE, }
SIR JOHN BRUTE.
LORD RAKE, } *Companions to SIR JOHN BRUTE.*
COLONEL BULLY, }
TREBLE, a *Singing-Master.*
RASOR, *Valet-de-Chambre to SIR JOHN BRUTE.*
LOVEWELL, *Page to LADY BRUTE.*
JOE, a *Porter.*
Justice of the Peace.

Page to LORD RAKE.
LADY BRUTE, *Wife of SIR JOHN BRUTE.*
BELINDA, *her Niece.*
LADY FANCYFUL.
MADemoisELLE, *Fille-de-Chambre to LADY FANCYFUL.*
CORNET, } *Maids to LADY FANCYFUL.*
PIPE, }
Tailor, Constable, Watchmen, Footmen, &c.

SCENE,—LONDON.

PROLOGUE.

SPOKEN BY MRS. BRACEGIRDLE.

SINCE 'tis the intent and business of the stage,
To copy out the follies of the age ;
To hold to every man a faithful glass,
And show him of what species he's an ass :
I hope the next that teaches in the school,
Will show our author he's a scribbling fool.
And, that the satire may be sure to bite,
Kind Heaven inspire some venom'd priest to write !
And grant some ugly lady may indite !
For I would have him lash'd, by heavens I would !
Till his presumption swam away in blood.
Three plays at once proclaims a face of brass,
No matter what they are ; that's not the case ;
To write three plays, e'en that's to be an ass.
But what I least forgive, he knows it too,
For to his cost he lately has known you.

Experience shows, to many a writer's smart,
You hold a court where mercy ne'er had part ;
So much of the old serpent's sting you have,
You love to damn, as Heaven delights to save.
In foreign parts, let a bold volunteer,
For public good, upon the stage appear,
He meets ten thousand smiles to dissipate his fear.
All tickle on the adventuring young beginner,
And only scourge the incorrigible sinner ;
They touch indeed his faults, but with a hand
So gentle, that his merit still may stand :
Kindly they buoy the follies of his pen,
That he may shun 'em when he writes again.
But 'tis not so in this good-natured town ;
All's one, an ox, a poet, or a crown ;
Old England's play was always knocking down.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—A Room in Sir JOHN BRUTE'S House.

Enter SIR JOHN BRUTE.

Sir John. What cloying meat is love—when matrimony's the sauce to it ! Two years' marriage has debauched my five senses. Everything I see, everything I hear, everything I feel, everything I smell, and everything I taste—methinks has wife in't. No boy was ever so weary of his tutor, no girl of her bib, no nun of doing penance, nor old

maid of being chaste, as I am of being married. Sure, there's a secret curse entailed upon the very name of wife. My lady is a young lady, a fine lady, a witty lady, a virtuous lady—and yet I hate her. There is but one thing I loathe on earth beyond her : that's fighting. Would my courage come up but to a fourth part of my ill-nature, I'd stand buff to her relations, and thrust her out of doors. But marriage has sunk me down to such an ebb of resolution, I dare not draw my sword, though even to get rid of my wife. But here she comes.

Enter Lady BRUTE.

Lady Brute. Do you dine at home to-day, sir John?

Sir John. Why, do you expect I should tell you what I don't know myself?

Lady Brute. I thought there was no harm in asking you.

Sir John. If thinking wrong were an excuse for impertinence, women might be justified in most things they say or do.

Lady Brute. I'm sorry I've said anything to displease you.

Sir John. Sorrow for things past is of as little importance to me, as my dining at home or abroad ought to be to you.

Lady Brute. My inquiry was only that I might have provided what you liked.

Sir John. Six to four you had been in the wrong there again; for what I liked yesterday I don't like to-day, and what I like to-day, 'tis odds I mayn't like to-morrow.

Lady Brute. But if I had asked you what you liked?

Sir John. Why, then, there would be more asking about it than the thing is worth.

Lady Brute. I wish I did but know how I might please you.

Sir John. Ay, but that sort of knowledge is not a wife's talent.

Lady Brute. Whate'er my talent is, I'm sure my will has ever been to make you easy.

Sir John. If women were to have their wills the world would be finely governed.

Lady Brute. What reason have I given you to use me as you do of late? It once was otherwise. You married me for love.

Sir John. And you me for money. So, you have your reward, and I have mine.

Lady Brute. What is it that disturbs you?

Sir John. A parson.

Lady Brute. Why, what has he done to you?

Sir John. He has married me. *[Exit.]*

Lady Brute. The devil's in the fellow, I think!—I was told before I married him that thus 'twould be: but I thought I had charms enough to govern him; and that where there was an estate, a woman must needs be happy; so, my vanity has deceived me, and my ambition has made me uneasy. But there's some comfort still; if one would be revenged of him, these are good times; a woman may have a gallant, and a separate maintenance too.—The surly puppy!—Yet, he's a fool for't; for hitherto he has been no monster: but who knows how far he may provoke me? I never loved him, yet I have been ever true to him; and that in spite of all the attacks of art and nature upon a poor weak woman's heart, in favour of a tempting lover. Methinks so noble a defence as I have made should be rewarded with a better usage.—Or who can tell—perhaps a good part of what I suffer from my husband, may be a judgment upon me for my cruelty to my lover.—Lord, with what pleasure could I indulge that thought, were there but a possibility of finding arguments to make it good!—And how do I know but there may?—Let me see.—What opposes?—My matrimonial vow.—Why, what did I vow? I think I promised to be true to my husband. Well; and he promised to be kind to me. But he han't kept his word.—Why, then, I am

absolved from mine.—Ay, that seems clear to me. The argument's good between the king and the people, why not between the husband and the wife? Oh, but that condition was not expressed.—No matter, 'twas understood. Well, by all I see, if I argue the matter a little longer with myself, I shan't find so many bugbears in the way as I thought I should. Lord, what fine notions of virtue do we women take up upon the credit of old foolish philosophers! Virtue's its own reward, virtue's this, virtue's that—virtue's an ass, and a gallant's worth forty on't.

Enter BELINDA.

Lady Brute. Good morrow, dear cousin!

Bel. Good-morrow, madam; you look pleased this morning.

Lady Brute. I am so.

Bel. With what, pray?

Lady Brute. With my husband.

Bel. Drown husbands! for yours is a provoking fellow. As he went out just now, I prayed him to tell me what time of day 'twas; and he asked me if I took him for the church-clock, that was obliged to tell all the parish.

Lady Brute. He has been saying some good obliging things to me too. In short, Belinda, he has used me so barbarously of late, that I could almost resolve to play the downright wife—and cuckold him.

Bel. That would be downright, indeed.

Lady Brute. Why, after all, there's more to be said for't than you'd imagine, child. I know, according to the strict statute law of religion, I should do wrong; but, if there were a Court of Chancery in heaven, I'm sure I should cast him.

Bel. If there were a House of Lords you might.

Lady Brute. In either I should infallibly carry my cause. Why, he's the first aggressor, not I.

Bel. Ay, but you know, we must return good for evil.

Lady Brute. That may be a mistake in the translation.—Prithee, be of my opinion, Belinda; for I'm positive I'm in the right; and if you'll keep up the prerogative of a woman, you'll likewise be positive you are in the right, whenever you do anything you have a mind to. But I shall play the fool and jest on, till I make you begin to think I'm in earnest.

Bel. I shan't take the liberty, madam, to think of anything that you desire to keep a secret from me.

Lady Brute. Alas, my dear! I have no secrets. My heart could never yet confine my tongue.

Bel. Your eyes, you mean; for I'm sure I have seen them gadding, when your tongue has been locked up safe enough.

Lady Brute. My eyes gadding! prithee after who, child?

Bel. Why, after one that thinks you hate him as much as I know you love him.

Lady Brute. Constant, you mean?

Bel. I do so.

Lady Brute. Lord, what should put such a thing into your head?

Bel. That which puts things into most people's heads—observation.

Lady Brute. Why what have you observed, in the name of wonder?

Bel. I have observed you blush when you meet

him, force yourself away from him, and then be out of humour with everything about you. In a word, never was poor creature so spurred on by desire, and so reined in with fear!

Lady Brute. How strong is fancy!

Bel. How weak is woman!

Lady Brute. Prithee, niece, have a better opinion of your aunt's inclination.

Bel. Dear aunt, have a better opinion of your niece's understanding.

Lady Brute. You'll make me angry.

Bel. You'll make me laugh.

Lady Brute. Then you are resolved to persist?

Bel. Positively.

Lady Brute. And all I can say—

Bel. Will signify nothing.

Lady Brute. Though I should swear 'twere false—

Bel. I should think it true.

Lady Brute. Then let us both forgive—[*Kissing her*] for we have both offended: I in making a secret, you in discovering it.

Bel. Good-nature may do much: but you have more reason to forgive one, than I have to pardon t'other.

Lady Brute. 'Tis true, Belinda, you have given me so many proofs of your friendship, that my reserve has been indeed a crime. But that you may more easily forgive me, remember, child, that when our nature prompts us to a thing our honour and religion have forbid us, we would (were't possible) conceal, even from the soul itself, the knowledge of the body's weakness.

Bel. Well, I hope, to make your friend amends, you'll hide nothing from her for the future, though the body should still grow weaker and weaker.

Lady Brute. No, from this moment I have no more reserve; and for a proof of my repentance, I own, Belinda, I'm in danger. Merit and wit assault me from without; nature and love solicit me within; my husband's barbarous usage piques me to revenge; and Satan, catching at the fair occasion, throws in my way that vengeance which, of all vengeance, pleases women best.

Bel. 'Tis well Constant don't know the weakness of the fortification; for, o' my conscience, he'd soon come on to the assault!

Lady Brute. Ay, and I'm afraid carry the town too. But whatever you may have observed, I have dissembled so well as to keep him ignorant. So you see I'm no coquette, Belinda: and if you'll follow my advice, you'll never be one neither. 'Tis true, coquetry is one of the main ingredients in the natural composition of a woman; and I, as well as others, could be well enough pleased to see a crowd of young fellows ogling, and glancing, and watching all occasions to do forty foolish officious things. Nay, should some of 'em push on, even to hanging or drowning, why, faith, if I should let pure woman alone, I should e'en be but too well pleased with't.

Bel. I'll swear 'twould tickle me strangely.

Lady Brute. But after all, 'tis a vicious practice in us to give the least encouragement but where we design to come to a conclusion. For 'tis an unreasonable thing to engage a man in a disease which we beforehand resolve we never will apply a cure to.

Bel. 'Tis true; but then a woman must abandon one of the supreme blessings of her life. For

I am fully convinced, no man has half that pleasure in possessing a mistress as a woman has in jilting a gallant.

Lady Brute. The happiest woman then on earth must be our neighbour.

Bel. O the impertinent composition! She has vanity and affectation enough to make her a ridiculous original, in spite of all that art and nature ever furnished to any of her sex before her.

Lady Brute. She concludes all men her captives; and whatever course they take, it serves to confirm her in that opinion.

Bel. If they shun her, she thinks 'tis modesty, and takes it for a proof of their passion.

Lady Brute. And if they are rude to her, 'tis conduct, and done to prevent town-talk.

Bel. When her folly makes 'em laugh, she thinks they are pleased with her wit.

Lady Brute. And when her impertinence makes 'em dull, concludes they are jealous of her favours.

Bel. All their actions and their words she takes for granted aim at her.

Lady Brute. And pities all other women because she thinks they envy her.

Bel. Pray, out of pity to ourselves, let us find a better subject, for I'm weary of this. Do you think your husband inclined to jealousy?

Lady Brute. Oh, no; he does not love me well enough for that. Lord, how wrong men's maxims are! They are seldom jealous of their wives, unless they are very fond of 'em; whereas they ought to consider the women's inclinations, for there depends their fate. Well, men may talk; but they are not so wise as we, that's certain.

Bel. At least in our affairs.

Lady Brute. Nay, I believe we should outdo 'em in the business of the state too; for methinks they do and undo, and make but bad work on't.

Bel. Why then don't we get into the intrigues of government as well as they?

Lady Brute. Because we have intrigues of our own that make us more sport, child. And so let's in, and consider of 'em. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—Lady FANCYFUL'S Dressing-Room.

Enter Lady FANCYFUL, MADemoisELLE, and CORNET.

Lady Fan. How do I look this morning?

Cor. Your ladyship looks very ill, truly.

Lady Fan. Lard, how ill-natured thou art, Cornet, to tell me so, though the thing should be true! Don't you know that I have humility enough to be but too easily out of conceit with myself. Hold the glass; I dare swear that will have more manners than you have.—Mademoiselle, let me have your opinion too.

Mad. My opinion pe, matam, dat your ladyship never look so well in your life.

Lady Fan. Well, the French are the prettiest obliging people; they say the most acceptable, well-mannered things, and never flatter.

Mad. Your ladyship say great justice inteed.

Lady Fan. Nay, everything's just in my house but Cornet.—The very looking-glass gives her the *démenti*.—But I'm almost afraid it flatters me, it makes me look so very engaging.

[*Looking affectedly in the glass.*]

Mad. Inteed, matam, your face pe handsomer den all de looking-glass in tee world, croyez-moi!

Lady Fan. But is it possible my eyes can be so languishing, and so very full of fire?

Mad. Matam, if de glass was burning-glass, I believe your eyes set de fire in de house.

Lady Fan. You may take that night-gown, Mademoiselle.—Get out of the room, Cornet! I can't endure you.—[*Exit CORNET.*] This wench, methinks, does look so unsufferably ugly.

Mad. Every ting look ugly, matam, dat stand by your latiship.

Lady Fan. No really, Mademoiselle, methinks you look mighty pretty.

Mad. Ah, matam, de moon have no eclat, ven de sun appear.

Lady Fan. O pretty expression! Have you ever been in love, Mademoiselle?

Mad. Oui, matam. [*Sighing.*]

Lady Fan. And were you beloved again?

Mad. No, matam. [*Sighing.*]

Lady Fan. O ye gods! what an unfortunate creature should I be in such a case! But nature has made me nice for my own defence: I'm nice, strangely nice, Mademoiselle. I believe were the merit of whole mankind bestowed upon one single person, I should still think the fellow wanted something to make it worth my while to take notice of him. And yet I could love; nay fondly love, were it possible to have a thing made on purpose for me: for I'm not cruel, Mademoiselle; I'm only nice.

Mad. Ah, matam, I wish I was fine gentleman for your sake. I do all de ting in de world to get leetel way into your heart. I make song, I make verse, I give you de serenade, I give great many present to Mademoiselle; I no eat, I no sleep, I be lean, I be mad, I hang myself, I drown myself. Ah ma chère dame, que je vous aimerais!

[*Embracing her.*]

Lady Fan. Well, the French have strange obliging ways with 'em; you may take those two pair of gloves, Mademoiselle.

Mad. Me humbly tanke my sweet lady.

Re-enter CORNET.

Cor. Madam, here's a letter for your ladyship by the penny-post. [*Exit.*]

Lady Fan. Some new conquest, I'll warrant you. For without vanity, I looked extremely clear last night, when I went to the Park.—O agreeable! Here's a new song made of me: and ready set too. O thou welcome thing!—[*Kissing it.*] Call Pipe hither, she shall sing it instantly.

Enter PIPE.

Here, sing me this new song, Pipe.

PIPE sings.

Fly, fly, you happy shepherds, fly!

Avoid Philira's charms;

The rigour of her heart denies

The heaven that's in her arms.

Ne'er hope to gaze, and then retire,

Nor yielding, to be blest:

Nature, who form'd her eyes of fire,

Of ice composed her breast.

Yet, lovely maid, this once believe

A slave whose zeal you move;

The gods, alas, your youth deceive,

Their heaven consists in love.

In spite of all the thanks you owe,

You may reproach 'em this,

That where they did their form bestow,

They have denied their bliss.

[*Exit.*]

Lady Fan. Well there may be faults, Mademoiselle, but the design is so very obliging, 'twould be a matchless ingratitude in me to discover 'em.

Mad. Ma foi, matam, I tink de gentleman's song tell you de trute: if you never love, you never be happy.—Ah, que j'aime l'amour moi!

Re-enter CORNET, with another letter.

Cor. Madam, here's another letter for your ladyship. [*Exit.*]

Lady Fan. 'Tis thus I am importuned every morning, Mademoiselle. Pray how do the French ladies when they are thus accablées?

Mad. Matam, dey never complain. Au contraire, when one Frense laty have got hundred lover—den she do all she can—to get hundred more.

Lady Fan. Well, strike me dead, I think they have le goût bon! For 'tis an unutterable pleasure to be adored by all the men, and envied by all the women.—Yet I'll swear I'm concerned at the torture I give 'em. Lard, why was I formed to make the whole creation uneasy! But let me read my letter.—[*Reads.*] *If you have a mind to hear of your faults, instead of being praised for your virtues, take the pains to walk in the Green-walk in St. James's with your woman an hour hence. You'll there meet one who hates you for some things, as he could love you for others, and therefore is willing to endeavour your reformation. If you come to the place I mention, you'll know who I am; if you don't, you never shall: so take your choice.*—This is strangely familiar, Mademoiselle; now have I a provoking fancy to know who this impudent fellow is.

Mad. Den take your scarf and your mask, and go to de rendezvous. De Frense laty do justement comme ça.

Lady Fan. Rendezvous! What, rendezvous with a man, Mademoiselle!

Mad. Eh, pourquoi non?

Lady Fan. What, and a man perhaps I never saw in my life.

Mad. Tant mieux: c'est donc quelque chose de nouveau.

Lady Fan. Why, how do I know what designs he may have? He may intend to ravish me for aught I know.

Mad. Ravish!—bagatelle. I would fain see one impudent rogue ravish Mademoiselle; oui, je le voudrais.

Lady Fan. Oh, but my reputation, Mademoiselle, my reputation; ah, ma chère réputation!

Mad. Matam, quand on l'a une fois perdue, on n'en est plus embarrassée.

Lady Fan. Fi Mademoiselle, fi! Reputation is a jewel.

Mad. Qui coûte bien-chère, matam.

Lady Fan. Why sure you would not sacrifice your honour to your pleasure?

Mad. Je suis philosophe.

Lady Fan. Bless me, how you talk! Why, what if honour be a burden, Mademoiselle, must it not be borne?

Mad. Chacun à sa façon. Quand quelque chose m'incommode moi, je m'en défaits, vite.

Lady Fan. Get you gone, you little naughty Frenchwoman you! I vow and swear I must turn you out of doors, if you talk thus.

Mad. Turn me out of doors!—turn yourself out of doors, and go see what de gentleman have to

say to you.—Tenez.—Voilà [*Giving her her things hastily*] votre écharpe, voilà votre coiffe, voilà votre masque, voilà tout.—[*Calling within.*] Hé, Mercure, coquin ! call one chair for matam, and one oder for me : va-t'en vite.—[*Turning to her lady, and helping her on hastily with her things.*] Allons, matam ; dépêchez-vous donc. Mon Dieu, quelles scrupules !

Lady Fan. Well for once, Mademoiselle, I'll follow your advice, out of the intemperate desire I have to know who this ill-bred fellow is. But I have too much délicatesse to make a practice on't.

Mad. Belle chose vraiment que la délicatesse, lorsqu'il s'agit de se divertir !—Ah, ça—Vous voilà équipée ; partons.—Hé bien !—qu'avez vous donc ?

Lady Fan. J'ai peur.

Mad. Je n'en ai point moi.

Lady Fan. I dare not go.

Mad. Demeurez donc.

Lady Fan. Je suis poltronne.

Mad. Tant pis pour vous.

Lady Fan. Curiosity's a wicked devil.

Mad. C'est une charmante sainte.

Lady Fan. It ruined our first parents.

Mad. Elle a bien diverti leurs enfans.

Lady Fan. L'honneur est contre.

Mad. Le plaisir est pour.

Lady Fan. Must I then go ?

Mad. Must you go !—must you eat, must you drink, must you sleep, must you live ? De nature bid you do one, de nature bid you do toder.—Vous me ferez enragier !

Lady Fan. But when reason corrects nature, Mademoiselle ?

Mad. Elle est donc bien insolente, c'est sa sœur aînée.

Lady Fan. Do you then prefer your nature to your reason, Mademoiselle ?

Mad. Oui dà.

Lady Fan. Pourquoi ?

Mad. Because my nature make me merry, my reason make me mad.

Lady Fan. Ah la méchante Française !

Mad. Ah la belle Anglaise !

[*Exit, forcing off Lady FANCYFUL.*]

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*St. James's Park.*

Enter Lady FANCYFUL and MADEMOISELLE.

Lady Fan. Well, I vow, Mademoiselle, I'm strangely impatient to know who this confident fellow is.

Enter HEARTFREE.

Look, there's Heartfree. But sure it can't be him ; he's a professed woman-hater. Yet who knows what my wicked eyes may have done !

Mad. Il nous approche, madame.

Lady Fan. Yes, 'tis he : now will he be most intolerably cavalier, though he should be in love with me.

Heart. Madam, I'm your humble servant ; I perceive you have more humility and good-nature than I thought you had.

Lady Fan. What you attribute to humility and good-nature, sir, may perhaps be only due to curiosity. I had a mind to know who 'twas had ill manners enough to write that letter.

[*Throwing him his Letter.*]

Heart. Well, and now I hope you are satisfied.

Lady Fan. I am so, sir ; good b'w'y t'ye.

Heart. Nay, hold there ; though you have done your business, I han't done mine : by your ladyship's leave, we must have one moment's prattle together. Have you a mind to be the prettiest woman about town, or not ? How she stares upon me ! What ! this passes for an impertinent question with you now, because you think you are so already.

Lady Fan. Pray, sir, let me ask you a question in my turn : by what right do you pretend to examine me ?

Heart. By the same right that the strong govern the weak, because I have you in my power ; for you cannot get so quickly to your coach but I shall

have time enough to make you hear everything I have to say to you.

Lady Fan. These are strange liberties you take, Mr. Heartfree !

Heart. They are so, madam, but there's no help for it ; for know that I have a design upon you.

Lady Fan. Upon me, sir !

Heart. Yes ; and one that will turn to your glory, and my comfort, if you will but be a little wiser than you use to be.

Lady Fan. Very well, sir.

Heart. Let me see—your vanity, madam, I take to be about some eight degrees higher than any woman's in the town, let t'other be who she will ; and my indifference is naturally about the same pitch. Now could you find the way to turn this indifference into fire and flames, methinks your vanity ought to be satisfied ; and this, perhaps, you might bring about upon pretty reasonable terms.

Lady Fan. And pray at what rate would this indifference be bought off, if one should have so depraved an appetite to desire it ?

Heart. Why, madam, to drive a quaker's bargain, and make but one word with you, if I do part with it—you must lay me down—your affectation.

Lady Fan. My affectation, sir !

Heart. Why, I ask you nothing but what you may very well spare.

Lady Fan. You grow rude, sir !—Come, Mademoiselle, 'tis high time to be gone.

Mad. Allons, allons, allons !

Heart. [*Stopping them.*] Nay, you may as well stand still ; for hear me you shall, walk which way you please.

Lady Fan. What mean you, sir ?

Heart. I mean to tell you, that you are the most ungrateful woman upon earth.

Lady Fan. Ungrateful ! To who ?

Heart. To nature.

Lady Fan. Why, what has nature done for me?

Heart. What you have undone by art. It made you handsome; it gave you beauty to a miracle, a shape without a fault, wit enough to make 'em relish, and so turned you loose to your own discretion; which has made such work with you, that you are become the pity of our sex, and the jest of your own. There is not a feature in your face, but you have found the way to teach it some affected convulsion; your feet, your hands, your very fingers' ends, are directed never to move without some ridiculous air or other; and your language is a suitable trumpet, to draw people's eyes upon the raree-show.

Mad. [*Aside.*] Est-ce qu'on fait l'amour en Angleterre comme ça?

Lady Fan. [*Aside.*] Now could I cry for madness, but that I know he'd laugh at me for it.

Heart. Now do you hate me for telling you the truth, but that's because you don't believe it is so; for were you once convinced of that, you'd reform for your own sake. But 'tis as hard to persuade a woman to quit anything that makes her ridiculous, as 'tis to prevail with a poet to see a fault in his own play.

Lady Fan. Every circumstance of nice breeding must needs appear ridiculous to one who has so natural an antipathy to good manners.

Heart. But suppose I could find the means to convince you, that the whole world is of my opinion, and that those who flatter and commend you, do it to no other intent, but to make you persevere in your folly, that they may continue in their mirth.

Lady Fan. Sir, though you and all that world you talk of, should be so impertinently officious as to think to persuade me I don't know how to behave myself, I should still have charity enough for my own understanding, to believe myself in the right, and all you in the wrong.

Mad. Le voilà mort!

[*Exeunt Lady FANCYFUL and MADEMOISELLE.*]

Heart. [*Gazing after her.*] There, her single clapper has published the sense of the whole sex. Well, this once I have endeavoured to wash the blackamoor white; but henceforward I'll sooner undertake to teach sincerity to a courtier, generosity to a usurer, honesty to a lawyer, nay, humility to a divine, than discretion to a woman I see has once set her heart upon playing the fool.

Enter CONSTANT.

Morrow, Constant.

Const. Good morrow, Jack: what are you doing here this morning?

Heart. Doing! guess, if thou canst.—Why I have been endeavouring to persuade my lady Fanciful that she's the foolishlest woman about town.

Const. A pretty endeavour truly!

Heart. I have told her in as plain English as I could speak, both what the town says of her, and what I think of her. In short, I have used her as an absolute king would do Magna Charta.

Const. And how does she take it?

Heart. As children do pills; bite 'em, but can't swallow 'em.

Const. But, prithee, what has put it into your head, of all mankind, to turn reformer?

Heart. Why, one thing was, the morning hung upon my hands, I did not know what to do with

myself; and another was, that as little as I care for women, I could not see with patience one that Heaven had taken such wondrous pains about, be so very industrious to make herself the jack-pudding of the creation.

Const. Well, now could I almost wish to see my cruel mistress make the self-same use of what Heaven has done for her, that so I might be cured of a disease that makes me so very uneasy; for love, love is the devil, Heartfree.

Heart. And why do you let the devil govern you?

Const. Because I have more flesh and blood than grace and self-denial. My dear, dear mistress!—Sdeath! that so genteel a woman should be a saint when religion's out of fashion!

Heart. Nay, she's much in the wrong truly; but who knows how far time and good example may prevail?

Const. Oh! they have played their parts in vain already. 'Tis now two years since that damned fellow her husband invited me to his wedding: and there was the first time I saw that charming woman, whom I have loved ever since, more than e'er a martyr did his soul; but she is cold, my friend, still cold as the northern star.

Heart. So are all women by nature, which makes 'em so willing to be warmed.

Const. Oh, don't profane the sex! Prithee think 'em all angels for her sake, for she's virtuous even to a fault.

Heart. A lover's head is a good accountable thing truly! He adores his mistress for being virtuous, and yet is very angry with her because she won't be lewd.

Const. Well, the only relief I expect in my misery is to see thee some day or other as deeply engaged as myself, which will force me to be merry in the midst of all my misfortunes.

Heart. That day will never come, be assured, Ned. Not but that I can pass a night with a woman, and for the time, perhaps, make myself as good sport as you can do. Nay, I can court a woman too, call her nymph, angel, goddess, what you please: but here's the difference 'twixt you and I; I persuade a woman she's an angel, and she persuades you she's one. Prithee let me tell you how I avoid falling in love; that which serves me for prevention, may chance to serve you for a cure.

Const. Well, use the ladies moderately then, and I'll hear you.

Heart. That using 'em moderately undoes us all; but I'll use 'em justly, and that you ought to be satisfied with. I always consider a woman, not as the tailor, the shoemaker, the tire-woman, the sempstress, and (which is more than all that) the poet makes her; but I consider her as pure nature has contrived her, and that more strictly than I should have done our old grandmother Eve, had I seen her naked in the garden; for I consider her turned inside out. Her heart, well-examined, I find there pride, vanity, covetousness, indiscretion, but above all things malice; plots eternally a-forging to destroy one another's reputations, and as honestly to charge the levity of men's tongues with the scandal; hourly debates how to make poor gentlemen in love with 'em, with no other intent but to use 'em like dogs when they have done; a constant desire of doing more mischief,

and an everlasting war waged against truth and good-nature.

Const. Very well, sir; an admirable composition truly!

Heart. Then for her outside, I consider it merely as an outside; she has a thin tiffany covering, over just such stuff as you and I are made on. As for her motion, her mien, her airs, and all those tricks, I know they affect you mightily. If you should see your mistress at a coronation dragging her peacock's train, with all her state and insolence about her, 'twould strike you with all the awful thoughts that heaven itself could pretend to from you; whereas I turn the whole matter into a jest, and suppose her strutting in the self-same stately manner, with nothing on but her stays, and her under scanty quilted petticoat.

Const. Hold thy profane tongue! for I'll hear no more.

Heart. What! you'll love on then?

Const. Yes, to eternity.

Heart. Yet you have no hopes at all.

Const. None.

Heart. Nay, the resolution may be discreet enough; perhaps you have found out some new philosophy, that love's like virtue, its own reward. So you and your mistress will be as well content at a distance, as others that have less learning are in coming together.

Const. No; but if she should prove kind at last, my dear Heartfree. [Embracing him.]

Heart. Nay, prithee, don't take me for your mistress, for lovers are very troublesome.

Const. Well, who knows what time may do!

Heart. And just now he was sure time could do nothing.

Const. Yet not one kind glance in two years, is somewhat strange.

Heart. Not strange at all; she don't like you, that's all the business.

Const. Prithee, don't distract me.

Heart. Nay, you are a good handsome young fellow, she might use you better. Come, will you go see her? Perhaps she may have changed her mind; there's some hopes as long as she's a woman.

Const. Oh, 'tis in vain to visit her! Sometimes to get a sight of her I visit that beast her husband; but she certainly finds some pretence to quit the room as soon as I enter.

Heart. It's much she don't tell him you have made love to her too, for that's another good-natured thing usual amongst women, in which they have several ends. Sometimes 'tis to recommend their virtue, that they may be lewd with the greater security. Sometimes 'tis to make their husbands fight, in hopes they may be killed when their affairs require it should be so: but most commonly 'tis to engage two men in a quarrel, that they may have the credit of being fought for; and if the lover's killed in the business, they cry, *Poor fellow, he had ill luck!*—and so they go to cards.

Const. Thy injuries to women are not to be forgiven. Look to't, if ever thou dost fall into their hands—

Heart. They can't use me worse then they do you, that speak well of 'em.—O ho! here comes the knight.

Enter Sir JOHN BRUTE.

Your humble servant, sir John.

Sir John. Servant, sir.

Heart. How does all your family?

Sir John. Pox o' my family!

Const. How does your lady? I han't seen her abroad a good while.

Sir John. Do! I don't know how she does, not I; she was well enough yesterday: I han't been at home to-night.

Const. What, were you out of town?

Sir John. Out of town! no, I was drinking.

Const. You are a true Englishman; don't know your own happiness. If I were married to such a woman, I would not be from her a night for all the wine in France.

Sir John. Not from her! Oons; what a time should a man have of that!

Heart. Why, there's no division, I hope.

Sir John. No; but there's a conjunction, and that's worse; a pox of the parson!—Why the plague don't you two marry? I fancy I look like the devil to you.

Heart. Why, you don't think you have horns, do you?

Sir John. No, I believe my wife's religion will keep her honest.

Heart. And what will make her keep her religion?

Sir John. Persecution; and therefore she shall have it.

Heart. Have a care, knight; women are tender things.

Sir John. And yet, methinks, 'tis a hard matter to break their hearts.

Const. Fy! fy! you have one of the best wives in the world, and yet you seem the most uneasy husband.

Sir John. Best wives!—the woman's well enough, she has no vice that I know of, but she's a wife, and—damn a wife! If I were married to a hog'shead of claret, matrimony would make me hate it.

Heart. Why did you marry, then? you were old enough to know your own mind.

Sir John. Why did I marry! I married because I had a mind to lie with her, and she would not let me.

Heart. Why did not you ravish her?

Sir John. Yes! and so have hedged myself into forty quarrels with her relations, besides buying my pardon. But more than all that, you must know, I was afraid of being damned in those days; for I kept sneaking cowardly company, fellows that went to church, said grace to their meat, and had not the least tincture of quality about 'em.

Heart. But I think you have got into a better gang now.

Sir John. Zoons, sir, my lord Rake and I are hand and glove, I believe we may get our bones broke together to-night; have you a mind to share a frolic?

Const. Not I, truly; my talent lies to softer exercises.

Sir John. What, a down-bed and a strumpet? A pox of venery! I say. Will you come and drink with me this afternoon?

Const. I can't drink to-day, but we'll come and sit an hour with you if you will.

Sir John. Phu! pox, sit an hour! Why can't you drink?

Const. Because I'm to see my mistress.

Sir John. Who's that?

Const. Why, do you use to tell?

Sir John. Yes.

Const. So won't I.

Sir John. Why?

Const. Because 'tis a secret.

Sir John. Would my wife knew it, 'twould be no secret long.

Const. Why, do you think she can't keep a secret?

Sir John. No more than she can keep Lent.

Heart. Prithee, tell it her to try, Constant.

Sir John. No, prithee, don't, that I mayn't be plagued with it.

Const. I'll hold you a guinea you don't make her tell it you.

Sir John. I'll hold you a guinea I do.

Const. Which way?

Sir John. Why, I'll beg her not to tell it me.

Heart. Nay, if anything does it, that will.

Const. But do you think, sir—

Sir John. Oons, sir, I think a woman and a secret are the two impertinentest themes in the universe! Therefore, pray let's hear no more of my wife nor your mistress. Damn 'em both with all my heart, and everything else that daggles a petticoat, except four generous whores, with Betty Sands at the head of 'em, who are drunk with my lord Rake and I ten times in a fortnight. *[Exit.]*

Const. Here's a dainty fellow for you! and the veriest coward too. But his usage of his wife makes me ready to stab the villain.

Heart. Lovers are short-sighted: all their senses run into that of feeling. This proceeding of his is the only thing on earth can make your fortune. If anything can prevail with her to accept of a gallant, 'tis his ill usage of her; for women will do more for revenge than they'll do for the gospel. Prithee take heart, I have great hopes for you; and since I can't bring you quite off of her, I'll endeavour to bring you quite on; for a whining lover is the damndest companion upon earth.

Const. My dear friend, flatter me a little more with these hopes; for whilst they prevail, I have heaven within me, and could melt with joy.

Heart. Pray, no melting yet: let things go farther first. This afternoon perhaps we shall make some advance. In the meanwhile, let's go dine at Locket's, and let hope get you a stomach.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE II—A Room in Lady FANCYFUL'S House.

Enter Lady FANCYFUL and MADEMOISELLE.

Lady Fan. Did you ever see anything so impertune, Mademoiselle?

Mad. Inteed, matam, to say de trute, he wanted leetel good-breeding.

Lady Fan. Good-breeding! he wants to be caned, Mademoiselle: an insolent fellow! And yet let me expose my weakness, 'tis the only man on earth I could resolve to dispense my favours on, were he but a fine gentleman. Well, did men but know how deep an impression a fine gentleman makes in a lady's heart, they would reduce all their studies to that of good-breeding alone.

Enter CORNET.

Cor. Madam, here's Mr. Treble. He has brought home the verses your ladyship made, and gave him to set.

Lady Fan. O let him come in by all means.—*[Exit CORNET.]*—Now, Mademoiselle, am I going to be unspeakably happy.

Enter TREELE and PIPE.

So, Mr. Treble, you have set my little dialogue?

Treb. Yes, madam, and I hope your ladyship will be pleased with it.

Lady Fan. Oh, no doubt on't; for really, Mr. Treble, you set all things to a wonder. But your music is in particular heavenly when you have my words to clothe in't.

Treb. Your words themselves, madam, have so much music in 'em, they inspire me.

Lady Fan. Nay, now you make me blush, Mr. Treble; but pray let's hear what you have done.

Treb. You shall, madam.

TREELE and PIPE sing.

Treb. Ah! lovely nymph, the world's on fire;

Veil, veil those cruel eyes!

Pipe. The world may then in flames expire,

And boast that so it dies.

Treb. But when all mortals are destroy'd,

Who then shall sing your praise?

Pipe. Those who are fit to be employ'd:

The gods shall altars raise.

Treb. How does your ladyship like it, madam?

Lady Fan. Rapture, rapture, Mr. Treble, I'm all rapture! O wit and art, what power you have, when joined! I must needs tell you the birth of this little dialogue, Mr. Treble. Its father was a dream, and its mother was the moon. I dreamt that by an unanimous vote I was chosen queen of that pale world: and that the first time I appeared upon my throne—all my subjects fell in love with me. Just then I waked, and seeing pen, ink, and paper lie idle upon the table, I slid into my morning-gown, and writ this impromptu.

Treb. So I guess the dialogue, madam, is supposed to be between your majesty, and your first minister of state.

Lady Fan. Just. He as minister advises me to trouble my head about the welfare of my subjects; which I as sovereign find a very impertinent proposal. But is the town so dull, Mr. Treble, it affords us never another new song?

Treb. Madam, I have one in my pocket, came out but yesterday, if your ladyship pleases to let Mrs. Pipe sing it.

Lady Fan. By all means.—Here, Pipe, make what music you can of this song here.

PIPE sings.

Not an angel dwells above

Half so fair as her I love,

Heaven knows how she'll receive me:

If she smiles, I'm blest indeed;

If she frowns, I'm quickly freed;

Heaven knows she ne'er can grieve me,

None can love her more than I,

Yet she ne'er shall make me die.

If my flame can never warm her,

Lasting beauty I'll adore,

I shall never love her more,

Cruelty will so deform her.

Lady Fan. Very well. — This is Heartfree's poetry, without question.

Treb. Won't your ladyship please to sing yourself this morning?

Lady Fan. O Lord, Mr. Treble, my cold is still so barbarous to refuse me that pleasure. He,—he,—hem. [Coughs.]

Treb. I'm very sorry for it, madam. Methinks all mankind should turn physicians for the cure on't.

Lady Fan. Why truly, to give mankind their due, there's few that know me, but have offered their remedy.

Treb. They have reason, madam: for I know nobody sings so near a cherubim as your ladyship.

Lady Fan. What I do, I owe chiefly to your skill and care, Mr. Treble. People do flatter me, indeed, that I have a voice, and a *je-ne-sais-quoi* in the conduct of it, that will make music of anything. And truly I begin to believe so, since what happened t'other night. Would you think it, Mr. Treble? walking pretty late in the Park (for I often walk late in the Park, Mr. Treble) a whim took me to sing Chevy-Chase, and would you believe it? next morning I had three copies of verses and six billets-doux at my levee upon it.

Treb. And without all dispute you deserved as many more, madam. Are there any further commands for your ladyship's humble servant?

Lady Fan. Nothing more at this time, Mr. Treble. But I shall expect you here every morning for this month, to sing my little matter there to me. I'll reward you for your pains.

Treb. O Lord, madam! —

Lady Fan. Good morrow, sweet Mr. Treble.

Treb. Your ladyship's most obedient servant.

[Exit with PIPE.]

Re-enter CORNET.

Cor. Will your ladyship please to dine yet?

Lady Fan. Yes, let 'em serve.—[Exit CORNET.]

Sure this Heartfree has bewitched me, Mademoiselle. You can't imagine how oddly he mixed himself in my thoughts during my rapture e'en now. I vow 'tis a thousand pities he is not more polished: don't you think so?

Mad. Matam, I tink it so great pity, dat if I was in your ladyship place, I take him home in my house, I lock him up in my closet, and I never let him go till I teach him everyting dat fine laty expect from fine gentleman.

Lady Fan. Why truly I believe I should soon subdue his brutality; for without doubt he has a strange penchant to grow fond of me, in spite of his aversion to the sex, else he would ne'er have taken so much pains about me. Lord, how proud would some poor creatures be of such a conquest! But I, alas, I don't know how to receive as a favour, what I take to be so infinitely my due. But what shall I do to new-mould him, Mademoiselle? for till then he's my utter aversion.

Mad. Matam, you must laugh at him in all de place dat you meet him, and turn into de ridicule all he say and all he do.

Lady Fan. Why truly, satire has ever been of wondrous use to reform ill-manners. Besides, 'tis my particular talent to ridicule folks. I can be severe, strangely severe, when I will, Mademoiselle.—Give me the pen and ink—I find myself whimsical—I'll write to him.—Or I'll let it alone, and be severe upon him that way.—[Sits down to write, rises up again.] Yet active severity is better than passive.—[Sits down.] 'Tis as good let it alone too; for every lash I give him perhaps he'll take for a favour.—[Rises.] Yet 'tis a thousand pities so much satire should be lost.—[Sits.] But if it should have a wrong effect upon him, 'twould distract me.—[Rises.] Well, I must write though, after all.—[Sits.] Or I'll let it alone, which is the same thing.— [Rises.]

Mad. [Aside.] I a voilà déterminée. [Exeunt.]

ACT III.

SCENE I.—A Room in Sir JOHN BRUTE's House.

Sir JOHN BRUTE, Lady BRUTE, and BELINDA, discovered rising from table; Servant waiting.

Sir John. [To Servant.] Here, take away the things; I expect company. But first bring me a pipe; I'll smoke.

[Servant gives Sir JOHN a pipe, removes the things, and exit.

Lady Brute. Lord, sir John, I wonder you won't leave that nasty custom!

Sir John. Prithce don't be impertinent.

Bel. [Aside to LADY BRUTE.] I wonder who those are he expects this afternoon?

Lady Brute. I'd give the world to know. Perhaps 'tis Constant, he comes here sometimes; if it does prove him, I'm resolved I'll share the visit.

Bel. We'll send for our work and sit here.

Lady Brute. He'll choke us with his tobacco.

Bel. Nothing will choke us when we are doing what we have a mind to.—Lovewell! [Calls.]

Enter LOVEWELL.

Love. Madam!

Lady Brute. Here; 'bring my cousin's work and mine hither.

[Exit LOVEWELL, re-enters with their work, and then retires.

Sir John. Whu! Pox! can't you work somewhere else?

Lady Brute. We shall be careful not to disturb you, sir.

Bel. Your pipe will make you too thoughtful, uncle, if you were left alone; our prittle-prattle will cure your spleen.

Sir John. Will it so, Mrs. Pert? Now I believe it will so increase it,—[Sitting and smoking] I shall take my own house for a paper mill.

Lady Brute. [Aside to BELINDA.] Don't let's mind him: let him say what he will.

Sir John. A woman's tongue a cure for the spleen—oons!—[Aside.] If a man had got the headache, they'd be for applying the same remedy.

Lady Brute. You have done a great deal, Belinda, since yesterday.

Bel. Yes, I have worked very hard; how do you like it?

Lady Brute. Oh, 'tis the prettiest fringe in the

world ! Well, cousin, you have the happiest fancy : prithe advise me about altering my crimson petticoat.

Sir John. A pox o' your petticoat ! Here's such a prating, a man can't digest his own thoughts for you.

Lady Brute. Don't answer him.—Well, what do you advise me ?

Bel. Why really I would not alter it at all. Methinks 'tis very pretty as it is.

Lady Brute. Ay, that's true : but you know one grows weary of the prettiest things in the world, when one has had 'em long.

Sir John. Yes, I have taught her that.

Bel. Shall we provoke him a little ?

Lady Brute. With all my heart.—Belinda, don't you long to be married ?

Bel. Why, there are some things in it I could like well enough.

Lady Brute. What do you think you should dislike ?

Bel. My husband, a hundred to one else.

Lady Brute. O ye wicked wretch ! sure you don't speak as you think.

Bel. Yes, I do : especially if he smoked tobacco.

[*Sir John looks earnestly at them.*]

Lady Brute. Why, that many times takes off worse smells.

Bel. Then he must smell very ill indeed.

Lady Brute. So some men will, to keep their wives from coming near 'em.

Bel. Then those wives should cuckold 'em at a distance.

[*Sir John rises in a fury, throws his pipe at them, and drives them out. As they go off Lady Brute runs against CONSTANT.*]

Enter CONSTANT and HEARTFREE, a Servant following.

Sir John. Oons, get you gone up stairs, you confederating strumpets you, or I'll cuckold you with a vengeance !

Lady Brute. O Lord, he'll beat us, he'll beat us !—Dear, dear Mr. Constant, save us !

[*Exit with BELINDA.*]

Sir John. I'll cuckold you, with a pox !

Const. Heavens, sir John ! what's the matter ?

Sir John. Sure, if woman had been ready created, the devil, instead of being kicked down into hell, had been married.

Heart. Why, what new plague have you found now ?

Sir John. Why these two gentlewomen did but hear me say, I expected you here this afternoon ; upon which they presently resolved to take up the room, o' purpose to plague me and my friends.

Const. Was that all ? Why we should have been glad of their company.

Sir John. Then I should have been weary of yours : for I can't relish both together. They found fault with my smoking tobacco too ; and said, men stunk. But I have a good mind—to say something.

Const. No, nothing against the ladies, pray.

Sir John. Split the ladies ! Come, will you sit down ?—[*To Servant.*] Give us some wine, fellow.—You won't smoke ?

Const. No, nor drink neither at this time, I must ask your pardon.

Sir John. What, this mistress of yours runs in your head ; I'll warrant it's some such squeamish minx as my wife, that's grown so dainty of late she finds fault even with a dirty shirt.

Heart. That a woman may do, and not be very dainty neither.

Sir John. Pox o' the women ! let's drink. Come, you shall take one glass, though I send for a box of lozenges to sweeten your mouth after it.

Const. Nay, if one glass will satisfy you, I'll drink it, without putting you to that expense.

Sir John. Why that's honest.—[*To Servant, who fills the glasses and exit.*] Fill some wine, sirrah !—So, here's to you, gentlemen !—A wife's the devil. To your being both married ? [They drink.]

Heart. O your most humble servant, sir.

Sir John. Well, how do you like my wine ?

Const. 'Tis very good indeed.

Heart. 'Tis admirable.

Sir John. Then give us t'other glass.

Const. No, pray excuse us now. We'll come another time, and then we won't spare it.

Sir John. This one glass, and no more. Come, it shall be your mistress's health : and that's a great compliment from me, I assure you.

Const. And 'tis a very obliging one to me : so give us the glasses.

Sir John. So : let her live !

[*They drink : Sir John coughs in the glass.*]

Heart. And be kind.

Const. What's the matter ? does it go the wrong way ?

Sir John. If I had love enough to be jealous, I should take this for an ill omen : for I never drank my wife's health in my life, but I puked in the glass.

Const. Oh she's too virtuous to make a reasonable man jealous.

Sir John. Pox of her virtue ! If I could but catch her adulterating, I might be divorced from her by law.

Heart. And so pay her a yearly pension, to be a distinguished cuckold.

Re-enter Servant.

Serv. Sir, there's my lord Rake, colonel Bully, and some other gentlemen, at the Blue-posts, desire your company. [Exit.]

Sir John. Cod's so, we are to consult about playing the devil to-night.

Heart. Well, we won't hinder business.

Sir John. Methinks I don't know how to leave you though ; but for once I must make bold. Or look you, maybe the conference mayn't last long : so if you'll wait here half an hour, or an hour ; if I don't come then—why then—I won't come at all.

Heart. [Aside to CONSTANT.] A good modest proposition truly !

Const. But let's accept on't however. Who knows what may happen !

Heart. Well, sir, to show you how fond we are of your company, we'll expect your return as long as we can.

Sir John. Nay, maybe I mayn't stay at all : but business, you know, must be done. So your servant—or, hark you, if you have a mind to take a frisk with us, I have an interest with my lord, I can easily introduce you.

Const. We are much beholden to you : but for my part, I'm engaged another way.

Sir John. What, to your mistress, I'll warrant ! Prithe leave your nasty punk to entertain herself with her own lewd thoughts, and make one with us to-night.

Const. Sir, 'tis business that is to employ me.

Heart. And me; and business must be done, you know.

Sir John. Ay, women's business, though the world were consumed for't. [Exit.]

Const. Farewell, beast!—And now, my dear friend, would my mistress be but as complaisant as some men's wives, who think it a piece of good-breeding to receive the visits of their husband's friends in his absence!

Heart. Why for your sake I could forgive her, though she should be so complaisant to receive something else in his absence. But what way shall we invent to see her?

Const. O ne'er hope it: invention will prove as vain as wishes.

Re-enter Lady BRUTE and BELINDA.

Heart. [Aside to CONSTANT.] What do you think now, friend?

Const. I think I shall swoon.

Heart. I'll speak first then, whilst you fetch breath.

Lady Brute. We think ourselves obliged, gentlemen, to come and return you thanks for your knight-errantry. We were just upon being devoured by the fiery dragon.

Bel. Did not his fumes almost knock you down, gentlemen?

Heart. Truly, ladies, we did undergo some hardships; and should have done more, if some greater heroes than ourselves had not diverted him.

Const. Though I'm glad of the service you are pleased to say we have done you, yet I'm sorry we could do it no other way than by making ourselves privy to what you would perhaps have kept a secret.

Lady Brute. For sir John's part, I suppose he designed it no secret, since he made so much noise: and, for myself, truly I am not much concerned, since 'tis fallen only into this gentleman's hands and yours, who, I have many reasons to believe, will neither interpret nor report anything to my disadvantage.

Const. Your good opinion, madam, was what I feared I never could have merited.

Lady Brute. Your fears were vain then, sir: for I am just to everybody.

Heart. Prithee, Constant, what is't you do to get the ladies' good opinions, for I'm a novice at it?

Bel. Sir, will you give me leave to instruct you?

Heart. Yes, that I will, with all my soul, madam.

Bel. Why then you must never be slovenly, never be out of humour; fare well, and cry roast-meat; smoke tobacco, nor drink but when you are a-dry.

Heart. That's hard.

Const. Nay, if you take his bottle from him, you break his heart, madam.

Bel. Why, is it possible the gentleman can love drinking?

Heart. Only by way of antidote.

Bel. Against what, pray?

Heart. Against love, madam.

Lady Brute. Are you afraid of being in love, sir?

Heart. I should, if there were any danger of it.

Lady Brute. Pray, why so?

Heart. Because I always had an aversion to being used like a dog.

Bel. Why, truly, men in love are seldom used better.

Lady Brute. But was you never in love, sir?

Heart. No, I thank Heaven, madam.

Bel. Pray where got you your learning, then?

Heart. From other people's expense.

Bel. That's being a spunger, sir, which is scarce honest. If you'd buy some experience with your own money, as 'twould be fairlier got, so 'twould stick longer by you.

Re-enter Servant.

Serv. Madam, here's my lady Fanciful, to wait upon your ladyship. [Exit.]

Lady Brute. Shield me, kind Heaven! What an inundation of impertinence is here coming upon us!

Enter Lady FANCYFUL, who runs first to Lady BRUTE, then to BELINDA, kissing them.

Lady Fan. My dear lady Brute! and sweet Belinda! methinks 'tis an age since I saw you.

Lady Brute. Yet 'tis but three days; sure you have passed your time very ill, it seems so long to you.

Lady Fan. Why really, to confess the truth to you, I am so everlastingly fatigued with the addresses of unfortunate gentlemen, that were it not for the extravagancy of the example, I should e'en tear out these wicked eyes with my own fingers, to make both myself and mankind easy.—What think you on't, Mr. Heartfree, for I take you to be my faithful adviser?

Heart. Why truly, madam, I think every project that is for the good of mankind ought to be encouraged.

Lady Fan. Then I have your consent, sir—

Heart. To do whatever you please, madam.

Lady Fan. You had a much more limited complaisance this morning, sir.—Would you believe it, ladies? the gentleman has been so exceeding generous, to tell me of above fifty faults in less time than it was well possible for me to commit two of 'em.

Const. Why truly, madam, my friend there is apt to be something familiar with the ladies.

Lady Fan. He is, indeed, sir; but he's wondrous charitable with it. He has had the goodness to design a reformation, even down to my fingers' ends.—'Twas thus, I think, sir, you'd have had 'em stand?—[Opening her fingers in an awkward manner.] My eyes too he did not like.—How was't you would have directed 'em?—Thus, I think.—[Staring at him.] Then there was something amiss in my gait too! I don't know well how 'twas, but, as I take it, he would have had me walk like him.—Pray, sir, do me the favour to take a turn or two about the room, that the company may see you.—He's sullen, ladies, and won't. But, to make short, and give you as true an idea as I can of the matter, I think 'twas moulded me to: but I was an obstinate woman, and could not resolve to make myself mistress of his heart by growing as awkward as his fancy.

[She walks awkwardly about, staring and looking ungainly; then changes on a sudden to the extremity of her usual affectation.]

Heart. Just thus women do, when they think we are in love with 'em, or when they are so with us.

[Here CONSTANT and Lady BRUTE talk together apart.]

Lady Fan. 'Twould, however, be less vanity for me to conclude the former than you the latter, sir.

Heart. Madam, all I shall presume to conclude is, that if I were in love, you'd find the means to make me soon weary on't.

Lady Fan. Not by over-fondness, upon my word, sir.—But pray let's stop here; for you are so much governed by instinct, I know you'll grow brutish at last.

Bel. [*Aside.*] Now I'm sure she's fond of him; I'll try to make her jealous.—[*Aloud.*] Well, for my part, I should be glad to find somebody would be so free with me, that I might know my faults, and mend 'em.

Lady Fan. Then pray let me recommend this gentleman to you: I have known him some time, and will be surety for him, that upon a very limited encouragement on your side, you shall find an extended impudence on his.

Heart. I thank you, madam, for your recommendation: but hating idleness, I'm unwilling to enter into a place where I believe there would be nothing to do. I was fond of serving your ladyship, because I knew you'd find me constant employment.

Lady Fan. I told you he'd be rude, Belinda!

Bel. Oh, a little bluntness is a sign of honesty, which makes me always ready to pardon it.—So, sir, if you have no other exceptions to my service, but the fear of being idle in 't, you may venture to list yourself: I shall find you work, I warrant you.

Heart. Upon those terms I engage, madam; and this (with your leave) I take for earnest.

[*Offering to kiss her hand.*]

Bel. Hold there, sir! I'm none of your earnest-givers: but if I'm well served, I give good wages, and pay punctually.

[*HEARTFREE and BELINDA talk familiarly apart.*]

Lady Fan. [*Aside.*] I don't like this jesting between 'em.—Methinks the fool begins to look as if he were in earnest;—but then he must be a fool indeed!—Lard, what a difference there is between me and her!—[*Looking at BELINDA scornfully.*]—How I should despise such a thing, if I were a man!—What a nose she has! what a chin! what a neck!—Then, her eyes!—and the worst kissing lips in the universe!—No, no, he can never like her, that's positive.—Yet I can't suffer 'em together any longer.—[*Aloud.*]—Mr. Heartfree, do you know that you and I must have no quarrel for all this?—I can't forbear being a little severe now and then: but women, you know, may be allowed anything.

Heart. Up to a certain age, madam.

Lady Fan. Which I'm not yet past, I hope.

Heart. [*Aside.*] Nor never will, I dare swear.

Lady Fan. [*To Lady BRUTE.*] Come, madam, will your ladyship be witness to our reconciliation?

Lady Brute. You agree then at last.

Heart. [*Sighingly.*] We forgive.

Lady Fan. [*Aside.*] That was a cold, ill-natured reply.

Lady Brute. Then there's no challenges sent between you?

Heart. Not from me, I promise!—[*Aside to CONSTANT.*] But that's more than I'll do for her, for I know she can as well be damned as forbear writing to me.

Const. That I believe. But I think we had best

be going, lest she should suspect something, and be malicious.

Heart. With all my heart.

Const. Ladies, we are your humble servants. I see sir John is quite engaged, 'twould be in vain to expect him.—Come, Heartfree.

Heart. Ladies, your servant.—[*To BELINDA.*] I hope, madam, you won't forget our bargain; I'm to say what I please to you.

Bel. Liberty of speech entire, sir.

[*Exit HEARTFREE and CONSTANT.*]

Lady Fan. [*Aside.*] Very pretty truly!—But how the blockhead went out! languishing at her; and not a look toward me!—Well, churchmen may talk, but miracles are not ceased. For 'tis more than natural, such a rude fellow as he, and such a little impertinent as she, should be capable of making a woman of my sphere uneasy. But I can bear her sight no longer.—Methinks she's grown ten times uglier than Cornet. I must go home, and study revenge.—[*To Lady BRUTE.*] Madam, your humble servant; I must take my leave.

Lady Brute. What, going already, madam?

Lady Fan. I must beg you'll excuse me this once; for really I have eighteen visits to return this afternoon. So you see I am importuned by the women as well as the men.

Bel. [*Aside.*] And she's quits with 'em both.

Lady Fan. [*Going.*] Nay, you shan't go one step out of the room.

Lady Brute. Indeed I'll wait upon you down.

Lady Fan. No, sweet lady Brute, you know I swoon at ceremony.

Lady Brute. Pray, give me leave.

Lady Fan. You know I won't.

Lady Brute. Indeed I must.

Lady Fan. Indeed you shan't.

Lady Brute. Indeed I will.

Lady Fan. Indeed you shan't.

Lady Brute. Indeed I will.

Lady Fan. Indeed you shan't. Indeed, indeed, indeed you shan't.

[*Exit running, Lady BRUTE and BELINDA following.*]

Re-enter Lady BRUTE.

Lady Brute. This impertinent woman has put me out of humour for a fortnight.—What an agreeable moment has her foolish visit interrupted!—Lord, how like a torrent love flows into the heart, when once the sluice of desire is opened! Good gods! what a pleasure there is in doing what we should not do!

Re-enter CONSTANT.

Ha! here again?

Const. Though the renewing my visit may seem a little irregular, I hope I shall obtain your pardon for it, madam, when you know I only left the room, lest the lady who was here should have been as malicious in her remarks, as she's foolish in her conduct.

Lady Brute. He who has discretion enough to be tender of a woman's reputation, carries a virtue about him may atone for a great many faults.

Const. If it has a title to atone for any, its pretensions must needs be strongest, where the crime is love. I therefore hope I shall be forgiven the attempt I have made upon your heart, since my enterprise has been a secret to all the world but yourself.

Lady Brute. Secrecy indeed in sins of this kind

is an argument of weight to lessen the punishment; but nothing's a plea for a pardon entire, without a sincere repentance.

Const. If sincerity in repentance consists in sorrow for offending, no cloister ever inclosed so true a penitent as I should be. But I hope it cannot be reckoned an offence to love, where 'tis a duty to adore.

Lady Brute. 'Tis an offence, a great one, where it would rob a woman of all she ought to be adored for, her virtue.

Const. Virtue!—Virtue, alas, is no more like the thing that's called so, than 'tis like vice itself. Virtue consists in goodness, honour, gratitude, sincerity, and pity; and not in peevish, snarling, strait-laced chastity. True virtue, wheresoe'er it moves, still carries an intrinsic worth about it, and is in every place, and in each sex, of equal value. So is not continence, you see: that phantom of honour, which men in every age have so contemned, they have thrown it amongst the women to scramble for.

Lady Brute. If it be a thing of so very little value, why do you so earnestly recommend it to your wives and daughters?

Const. We recommend it to our wives, madam, because we would keep 'em to ourselves; and to our daughters, because we would dispose of 'em to others.

Lady Brute. 'Tis then of some importance, it seems, since you can't dispose of 'em without it.

Const. That importance, madam, lies in the humour of the country, not in the nature of the thing.

Lady Brute. How do you prove that, sir?

Const. From the wisdom of a neighbouring nation in a contrary practice. In monarchies things go by whimsy, but commonwealths weigh all things in the scale of reason.

Lady Brute. I hope we are not so very light a people, to bring up fashions without some ground.

Const. Pray what does your ladyship think of a powdered coat for deep mourning?

Lady Brute. I think, sir, your sophistry has all the effect that you can reasonably expect it should have; it puzzles, but don't convince.

Const. I'm sorry for it.

Lady Brute. I'm sorry to hear you say so.

Const. Pray why?

Lady Brute. Because if you expected more from it, you have a worse opinion of my understanding than I desire you should have.

Const. [*Aside.*] I comprehend her: she would have me set a value upon her chastity, that I may think myself the more obliged to her when she makes me a present of it.—[*Aloud.*] I beg you will believe I did but rally, madam; I know you judge too well of right and wrong to be deceived by arguments like those. I hope you'll have so favourable an opinion of my understanding too, to believe the thing called virtue has worth enough with me to pass for an eternal obligation where'er 'tis sacrificed.

Lady Brute. It is, I think, so great a one, as nothing can repay.

Const. Yes; the making the man you love your everlasting debtor.

Lady Brute. When debtors once have borrowed all we have to lend, they are very apt to grow shy of their creditors' company

Const. That, madam, is only when they are forced to borrow of usurers, and not of a generous friend. Let us choose our creditors, and we are seldom so ungrateful to shun 'em.

Lady Brute. What think you of sir John, sir? I was his free choice.

Const. I think he's married, madam.

Lady Brute. Does marriage then exclude men from your rule of constancy?

Const. It does. Constancy's a brave, free, haughty, generous agent, that cannot buckle to the chains of wedlock. There's a poor sordid slavery in marriage, that turns the flowing tide of honour, and sinks us to the lowest ebb of infamy. 'Tis a corrupted soil; ill-nature, avarice, sloth, cowardice, and dirt, are all its product.

Lady Brute. Have you no exceptions to this general rule, as well as to t'other?

Const. Yes; I would (after all) be an exception to it myself, if you were free in power and will to make me so.

Lady Brute. Compliments are well placed, where 'tis impossible to lay hold on 'em.

Const. I would to heaven 'twere possible for you to lay hold on mine, that you might see it is no compliment at all. But since you are already disposed of beyond redemption, to one who does not know the value of the jewel you have put into his hands, I hope you would not think him greatly wronged, though it should sometimes be looked on by a friend, who knows how to esteem it as he ought.

Lady Brute. If looking on't alone would serve his turn, the wrong perhaps might not be very great.

Const. Why, what if he should wear it now and then a day, so he gave good security to bring it home again at night?

Lady Brute. Small security I fancy might serve for that. One might venture to take his word.

Const. Then where's the injury to the owner?

Lady Brute. 'Tis injury to him if he think it one. For if happiness be seated in the mind, unhappiness must be so too.

Const. Here I close with you, madam, and draw my conclusive argument from your own position: if the injury lie in the fancy, there needs nothing but secrecy to prevent the wrong.

Lady Brute. [*Going.*] A surer way to prevent it, is to hear no more arguments in its behalf.

Const. [*Following her.*] But, madam—

Lady Brute. But, sir, 'tis my turn to be discreet now, and not suffer too long a visit.

Const. [*Catching her hand.*] By heaven you shall not stir! till you give me hopes that I shall see you again at some more convenient time and place.

Lady Brute. I give you just hopes enough—[*Breaking from him*] to get loose from you: and that's all I can afford you at this time.

[*Exit, running.*]

Const. Now by all that's great and good, she's a charming woman! In what ecstasy of joy she has left me! For she gave me hope; did she not say she gave me hope?—Hope! ay; what hope!—enough to make me let her go!—Why that's enough in conscience. Or, no matter how 'twas spoke; hope was the word; it came from her, and it was said to me.

Re-enter HEARTFREE.

Ha, Heartfree! Thou hast done me noble service in prattling to the young gentlewoman without there; come to my arms, thou venerable bawd, and let me squeeze thee—*[Embracing him eagerly]* as a new pair of stays does a fat country girl, when she's carried to court to stand for a maid of honour.

Heart. Why, what the devil's all this rapture for?

Const. Rapture! there's ground for rapture, man; there's hopes, my Heartfree; hopes, my friend!

Heart. Hopes! of what?

Const. Why, hopes that my lady and I together (for 'tis more than one body's work) should make sir John a cuckold.

Heart. Prithee, what did she say to thee?

Const. Say! what did she not say? She said that—says she—she said—zoons, I don't know what she said: but she looked as if she said everything I'd have her; and so if thou'lt go to the tavern, I'll treat thee with anything that gold can buy: I'll give all my silver amongst the drawers, make a bonfire before the door, say the plenips have signed the peace, and the Bank of England's grown honest. *[Exit.*

SCENE II.—*The Blue Posts.*

Lord RAKE, SIR JOHN BRUTE, Colonel BULLY and others discovered at a table, drinking. Page waiting.

All. Huzza!

Rake. Come, boys, charge again.—So.—Confusion to all order! Here's liberty of conscience!

All. Huzza!

Rake. I'll sing you a song I made this morning to this purpose.

Sir John. 'Tis wicked, I hope.

Bully. Don't my lord tell you he made it?

Sir John. Well then, let's ha't.

Lord RAKE sings.

What a pother of late
Have they kept in the state
About setting our consciences free!
A bottle has more
Dispensations in store,
Than the king and the state can decree.

When my head's full of wine,
I o'erflow with design,
And know no penal laws that can curb me:
Whate'er I devise,
Seems good in my eyes,
And religion ne'er dares to disturb me.

No saucy remorse
Intrudes in my course,
Nor impertinent notions of evil,
So there's claret in store,
In peace I've my where,
And in peace I jog on to the devil.

All. So there's claret in store,
In peace I've my where,

Rake. And in peace I jog on to the devil.

Well, how do you like it, gentlemen?

All. O, admirable!

Sir John. I would not give a fig for a song that is not full of sin and impudence.

Rake. Then my muse is to your taste.—But

drink away; the night steals upon us; we shall want time to be lewd in.—Hey, page, sally out, sirrah, and see what's doing in the camp; we'll beat up their quarters presently.

Page. I'll bring your lordship an exact account.

[Exit.

Rake. Now let the spirit of clary go round! Fill me a brimmer. Here's to our forlorn hope!
—Courage, knight; victory attends you.

Sir John. And laurels shall crown me; drink away, and be damned.

Rake. Again, boys; t'other glass, and damn morality.

Sir John. *[Drunk.]* Ay—damn morality!—and damn the watch!—and let the constable be married!

All. Huzza!

Re-enter Page.

Rake. How are the streets inhabited, sirrah?

Page. My lord, it's Sunday night, they are full of drunken citizens.

Rake. Along then, boys, we shall have a feast.

Bully. Along, noble knight.

Sir John. Ay—along, Bully; and he that says sir John Brute is not as drunk and as religious as the drunkenest citizen of them all—is a liar, and the son of a whore.

Bully. Why, that was bravely spoke, and like a free-born Englishman.

Sir John. What's that to you, sir, whether I am an Englishman or a Frenchman?

Bully. Zoons, you are not angry, sir?

Sir John. Zoons, I am angry, sir!—for if I'm a free-born Englishman, what have you to do, even to talk of my privileges?

Rake. Why, prithee, knight, don't quarrel here, leave private animosities to be decided by daylight; let the night be employed against the public enemy.

Sir John. My lord, I respect you because you are a man of quality: but I'll make that fellow know, I am within a hair's-breadth as absolute by my privileges, as the king of France is by his prerogative. He by his prerogative takes money where it is not his due; I by my privilege refuse paying it where I owe it. Liberty and property, and Old England, huzza!

All. Huzza!

[Exit SIR JOHN, reeling, the rest following him.]

SCENE III.—*Lady BRUTE's Bedchamber.*

Enter Lady BRUTE and BELINDA.

Lady Brute. Sure, it's late, Belinda; I begin to be sleepy.

Bel. Yes, 'tis near twelve. Will you go to bed?

Lady Brute. To bed, my dear! and by that time I am fallen into a sweet sleep (or perhaps a sweet dream, which is better and better) sir John will come home roaring drunk, and be overjoyed he finds me in a condition to be disturbed.

Bel. Oh, you need not fear him, he's in for all night. The servants say he is gone to drink with my lord Rake.

Lady Brute. Nay, 'tis not very likely, indeed, such suitable company should part presently. What hogs men turn, Belinda, when they grow weary of women!

Bel. And what owls they are whilst they are fond of 'em!

Lady Brute. But that we may forgive well enough, because they are so upon our accounts.

Bel. We ought to do so indeed, but 'tis a hard matter. For when a man is really in love he looks so insufferably silly, that though a woman liked him well enough before, she has then much ado to endure the sight of him. And this I take to be the reason why lovers are so generally ill used.

Lady Brute. Well, I own now, I'm well enough pleased to see a man look like an ass for me.

Bel. Ay, I'm pleased he should look like an ass too—that is, I am pleased with myself for making him look so.

Lady Brute. Nay, truly, I think if he'd find some other way to express his passion, 'twould be more to his advantage.

Bel. Yes; for then a woman might like his passion, and him too.

Lady Brute. Yet, Belinda, after all, a woman's life would be but a dull business, if 'twere not for men; and men that can look like asses too. We should never blame fate for the shortness of our days; our time would hang wretchedly upon our hands.

Bel. Why, truly, they do help us off with a good share on't. For were there no men in the world, o'my conscience, I should be no longer a-dressing than I'm a-saying my prayers; nay, though it were Sunday: for you know one may go to church without stays on.

Lady Brute. But don't you think emulation might do something? For every woman you see desires to be finer than her neighbour.

Bel. That's only that the men may like her better than her neighbour. No; if there were no men, adieu fine petticoats, we should be weary of wearing 'em.

Lady Brute. And adieu plays, we should be weary of wearing 'em.

Bel. Adieu Hyde-Park, the dust would choke us.

Lady Brute. Adieu St. James's, walking would tire us.

Bel. Adieu London, the smoke would stifle us.

Lady Brute. And adieu going to church, for religion would ne'er prevail with us.

Both. Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!

Bel. Our confession is so very hearty, sure we merit absolution.

Lady Brute. Not unless we go through with't, and confess all. So, prithee, for the ease of our consciences, let's hide nothing.

Bel. Agreed.

Lady Brute. Why, then, I confess that I love to sit in the fore-front of a box; for, if one sits behind, there's two acts gone perhaps before one's found out. And when I am there, if I perceive the men whispering and looking upon me, you must know I cannot for my life forbear thinking they talk to my advantage. And that sets a thousand little tickling vanities on foot—

Bel. Just my case for all the world; but go on.

Lady Brute. I watch with impatience for the next jest in the play, that I may laugh and show my white teeth. If the poet has been dull, and the jest be long a-coming, I pretend to whisper one to my friend, and from thence fall into a little small discourse, in which I take occasion to show my face in all humours, brisk, pleased, serious, melancholy, languishing.—Not that what we say to one another causes any of these alterations; but—

Bel. Don't trouble yourself to explain; for, if I'm not mistaken, you and I have had some of these necessary dialogues before now, with the same intention.

Lady Brute. Why, I'll swear, some people do give strange agreeable airs to their faces in speaking. Tell me true—did you never practise in the glass?

Bel. Why, did you?

Lady Brute. Yes, faith, many a time.

Bel. And I too, I own it; both how to speak myself, and how to look when others speak. But my glass and I could never yet agree what face I should make when they come blurt out with a nasty thing in a play. For all the men presently look upon the women, that's certain; so, laugh we must not, though our stays burst for't, because that's telling truth, and owning we understand the jest: and to look serious is so dull, when the whole house is a-laughing.

Lady Brute. Besides, that looking serious does really betray our knowledge in the matter as much as laughing with the company would do: for, if we did not understand the thing, we should naturally do like other people.

Bel. For my part, I always take that occasion to blow my nose.

Lady Brute. You must blow your nose half off then at some plays.

Bel. Why don't some reformer or other beat the poet for't?

Lady Brute. Because he is not so sure of our private approbation as of our public thanks. Well, sure, there is not upon earth so impertinent a thing as women's modesty.

Bel. Yes; men's *fantasque*, that obliges us to it. If we quit our modesty, they say we lose our charms; and yet they know that very modesty is affectation, and rail at our hypocrisy.

Lady Brute. Thus one would think 'twere a hard matter to please 'em, niece: yet our kind mother nature has given us something that makes amends for all. Let our weakness be what it will, mankind will still be weaker; and whilst there is a world 'tis woman that will govern it. But, prithee, one word of poor Constant before we go to bed, if it be but to furnish matter for dreams.—I dare swear he's talking of me now, or thinking of me at least, though it be in the middle of his prayers.

Bel. So he ought, I think; for you were pleased to make him a good round advance to-day, madam.

Lady Brute. Why, I have e'en plagued him enough to satisfy any reasonable woman. He has besieged me these two years to no purpose.

Bel. And if he besieged you two years more, he'd be well enough paid, so he had the plundering of you at last.

Lady Brute. That may be: but I'm afraid the town won't be able to hold out much longer: for, to confess the truth to you, Belinda, the garrison begins to grow mutinous.

Bel. Then the sooner you capitulate the better.

Lady Brute. Yet, methinks, I would fain stay a little longer to see you fixed too, that we might start together, and see who could love longest. What think you, if Heartfree should have a month's mind to you?

Bel. Why, faith, I could almost be in love with him for despising that foolish, affected lady Fancy-

ful; but I'm afraid he's too cold ever to warm himself by my fire.

Lady Brute. Then he deserves to be froze to death. Would I were a man for your sake, dear rogue. *[Kissing her.]*

Bel. You'd wish yourself a woman again for your own, or the men are mistaken. But if I could make a conquest of this son of Bacchus, and rival his bottle, what should I do with him? He has no fortune, I can't marry him; and sure you would not have me commit fornication.

Lady Brute. Why, if you did, child, 'twould be but a good friendly part; if 'twere only to keep me in countenance whilst I commit—you know what.

Bel. Well, if I can't resolve to serve you that way, I may perhaps some other as much to your satisfaction. But pray, how shall we contrive to see these blades again quickly?

Lady Brute. We must e'en have recourse to the old way; make 'em an appointment 'twixt jest and earnest, 'twill look like a frolic, and that you know's a very good thing to save a woman's blushes.

Bel. You advise well; but where shall it be?

Lady Brute. In Spring-Garden. But they shan't know their women till their women pull off their masks; for a surprise is the most agreeable thing in the world: and I find myself in a very good humour, ready to do 'em any good turn I can think on.

Bel. Then pray write 'em the necessary billet without further delay.

Lady Brute. Let's go into your chamber, then, and whilst you say your prayers, I'll do it, child.

[Exeunt.]

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—Covent-Garden*.

Enter Lord RAKE, Sir JOHN BRUTE, Colonel BULLY, and others, with drawn swords.

Rake. Is the dog dead?

Bully. No, damn him! I heard him wheeze.

Rake. How the witch his wife howled!

Bully. Ay, she'll alarm the watch presently.

Rake. Appear, knight, then; come, you have a good cause to fight for, there's a man murdered.

Sir John. Is there! then let his ghost be satisfied, for I'll sacrifice a constable to it presently, and burn his body upon his wooden chair.

Enter a Tailor, with a bundle under his arm.

Bully. How now! what have we got here? a thief!

Tailor. No, an't please you, I'm no thief.

Rake. That we'll see presently.—Here, let the general examine him.

Sir John. Ay, ay, let me examine him, and I'll lay a hundred pound I find him guilty in spite of his teeth—for he looks—like a—sneaking rascal.—Come, sirrah, without equivocation or mental reservation, tell me of what opinion you are, and what calling; for by them—I shall guess at your morals.

Tailor. An't please you, I'm a dissenting journeyman tailor.

Sir John. Then, sirrah, you love lying by your religion, and theft by your trade; and so that your punishment may be suitable to your crimes—I'll have you first gagged—and then hanged.

Tailor. Pray, good worthy gentlemen, don't abuse me; indeed I'm an honest man, and a good workman, though I say it that should not say it.

Sir John. Nowords, sirrah, but attend your fate.

Rake. Let me see what's in that bundle.

Tailor. An't please you, it's the doctor of the parish's gown.

Rake. The doctor's gown!—Hark you, knight, you won't stick at abusing the clergy, will you?

Sir John. No, I'm drunk, and I'll abuse anything—but my wife; and her I name—with reverence.

Rake. Then you shall wear this gown whilst you charge the watch; that though the blows fall upon you, the scandal may light upon the church.

Sir John. A generous design—by all the gods!—give it me. *[Takes the gown, and puts it on.]*

Tailor. O dear gentlemen, I shall be quite undone, if you take the gown.

Sir John. Retire, sirrah: and since you carry off your skin—go home, and be happy.

Tailor. *[Pausing.]* I think I had e'en as good follow the gentleman's friendly advice; for if I dispute any longer, who knows but the whim may take him to case me? These courtiers are fuller of tricks than they are of money; they'll sooner cut a man's throat than pay his bill. *[Exit.]*

Sir John. So, how do you like my shapes now?

Rake. This will do to a miracle; he looks like a bishop going to the holy war.—But to your arms, gentlemen, the enemy appears.

Enter Constable and Watchmen.

Watchman. Stand! Who goes there? Come before the constable.

Sir John. The constable's a rascal—and you are the son of a whore!

Watch. A good civil answer for a parson, truly!

Constable. Methinks, sir, a man of your coat might set a better example.

Sir John. Sirrah, I'll make you know—there are men of my coat can set as bad examples—as you can do, you dog you!

[Sir John strikes the Constable. They knock him down, disarm him, and seize him. Lord RAKE and the rest run away.]

Con. So, we have secured the parson, however.

Sir John. Blood, and blood—and blood!

Watch. Lord have mercy upon us! how the wicked wretch raves of blood. I'll warrant he has been murdering somebody to-night.

Sir John. Sirrah, there's nothing got by murder but a halter. My talent lies towards drunkenness and simony.

Watch. Why, that now was spoke like a man of parts, neighbours, it's pity he should be so disguised.

* See page 364.

Sir John. You lie!—I'm not disguised, for I am drunk barefaced.

Watch. Look you there again!—This is a mad parson, Mr. Constable; I'll lay a pot of ale upon's head, he's a good preacher.

Con. Come, sir, out of respect to your calling, I shan't put you into the round-house; but we must secure you in our drawing-room till morning, that you may do no mischief. So, come along.

Sir John. You may put me where you will, sirrah, now you have overcome me.—But if I can't do mischief, I'll think of mischief—in spite of your teeth, you dog you. [Exit.

SCENE II.—HEARTFREE'S Lodgings.

Enter HEARTFREE.

Heart. What the plague ails me?—Love? No, I thank you for that, my heart's rock still.—Yet 'tis Belinda that disturbs me; that's positive.—Well, what of all that? Must I love her for being troublesome? at that rate I might love all the women I meet, egad. But hold!—though I don't love her for disturbing me, yet she may disturb me because I love her.—Ay, that may be, faith. I have dreamed of her, that's certain.—Well, so I have of my mother; therefore, what's that to the purpose? Ay, but Belinda runs in my mind waking.—And so does many a damned thing that I don't care a farthing for.—Methinks, though, I would fain be talking to her, and yet I have no business.—Well, am I the first man that has had a mind to do an impertinent thing?

Enter CONSTANT.

Const. How now, Heartfree! what makes you up and dressed so soon? I thought none but lovers quarreled with their beds; I expected to have found you snoring, as I used to do.

Heart. Why, faith, friend, 'tis the care I have of your affairs that makes me so thoughtful; I have been studying all night how to bring your matter about with Belinda.

Const. With Belinda!

Heart. With my lady, I mean:—and faith I have mighty hopes on't. Sure you must be very well satisfied with her behaviour to you yesterday?

Const. So well, that nothing but a lover's fears can make me doubt of success. But what can this sudden change proceed from?

Heart. Why, you saw her husband beat her, did you not?

Const. That's true: a husband is scarce to be borne upon any terms, much less when he fights with his wife. Methinks she should e'en have cuckolded him upon the very spot, to show that after the battle she was master of the field.

Heart. A council of war of women would infallibly have advised her to't. But, I confess, so agreeable a woman as Belinda deserves a better usage.

Const. Belinda again!

Heart. My lady, I mean.—What a pox makes me blunder so to-day?—[*Aside.*] A plague of this treacherous tongue!

Const. Prithee look upon me seriously, Heartfree.—Now answer me directly. Is it my lady or Belinda employs your careful thoughts thus?

Heart. My lady, or Belinda!

Const. In love! by this light, in love!

Heart. In love!

Const. Nay, ne'er deny it; for thou'lt do it so awkwardly, 'twill but make the jest sit heavier about thee. My dear friend, I give thee much joy.

Heart. Why, prithee, you won't persuade me to it, will you?

Const. That she's mistress of your tongue, that's plain; and I know you are so honest a fellow, your tongue and heart always go together. But how—but how the devil,—pha! ha! ha! ha! ha!—

Heart. Heyday! why sure you don't believe it in earnest?

Const. Yes I do, because I see you deny it in jest.

Heart. Nay, but look you, Ned—a—deny in jest—a—gadzooks, you know I say—a—when a man denies a thing in jest—a—

Const. Pha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!

Heart. Nay, then we shall have it. What, because a man stumbles at a word! Did you never make a blunder?

Const. Yes, for I am in love, I own it.

Heart. Then so am I. Now laugh till thy soul's gluttied with mirth.—[*Embracing him.*] But, dear Constant, don't tell the town on't.

Const. Nay then, 'twere almost pity to laugh at thee, after so honest a confession. But tell us a little, Jack, by what new-invented arms has this mighty stroke been given?

Heart. E'en by that unaccountable weapon, called *Je-ne-sais-quoi*: for everything that can come within the verge of beauty I have seen it with indifference.

Const. So in few words then; the *Je-ne-sais-quoi* has been too hard for the quilted petticoat.

Heart. Egad, I think the *Je-ne-sais-quoi* is in the quilted petticoat; at least 'tis certain I ne'er think on't without—a—a *Je-ne-sais-quoi* in every part about me.

Const. Well, but have all your remedies lost their virtue? have you turned her inside out yet?

Heart. I dare not so much as think on't.

Const. But don't the two years' fatigue I have had discourage you?

Heart. Yes: I dread what I foresee, yet cannot quit the enterprise. Like some soldiers, whose courage dwells more in their honour than their nature. On they go, though the body trembles at what the soul makes it undertake.

Const. Nay, if you expect your mistress will use you, as your profanations against her sex deserve, you tremble justly. But how do you intend to proceed, friend?

Heart. Thou knowest I'm but a novice; be friendly and advise me.

Const. Why, look you, then; I'd have you—serenade and a—write a song—go to church—look like a fool—be very officious—ogle—write—and lead out: and who knows, but in a year or two's time, you may be—called a troublesome puppy, and sent about your business?

Heart. That's hard.

Const. Yet thus it oft falls out with lovers, sir.

Heart. Pox on me for making one of the number.

Const. Have a care: say no saucy things; 'twill but augment your crime; and if your mistress hears on't, increase your punishment.

Heart. Prithee, say something then to encourage me: you know I helped you in your distress.

Const. Why, then, to encourage you to perseverance, though you may be thoroughly ill used for your offences; I'll put you in mind, that even the coyest ladies of 'em all are made up of desires, as well as we; and though they do hold out a long time, they will capitulate at last. For that thundering engineer, Nature, does make such havoc in the town, they must surrender at long-run, or perish in their own flames.

Enter a Footman.

Foot. Sir, there's a porter without with a letter; he desires to give it into your own hands.

Const. Call him in. *[Exit Footman.]*

Enter Joe.

Const. What, Joe! is it thee?

Joe. An't please you, sir, I was ordered to deliver this into your own hands, by two well-shaped ladies, at the New Exchange. I was at your honour's lodgings, and your servants sent me hither.

Const. 'Tis well. Are you to carry any answer?

Joe. No, my noble master. They gave me my orders, and whip, they were gone, like a maiden-head at fifteen.

Const. Very well; there. *[Gives him money.]*

Joe. God bless your honour. *[Exit.]*

Const. Now let's see what honest trusty Joe has brought us.—*[Reads.]* If you and your play-fellow can spare time from your business and devotions, don't fail to be at Spring-Garden about eight in the evening. You'll find nothing there but women, so you need bring no other arms than what you usually carry about you.—So, play-fellow: here's something to stay your stomach till your mistress's dish is ready for you.

Heart. Some of our old battered acquaintance. I won't go, not I.

Const. Nay, that you can't avoid: there's honour in the case; 'tis a challenge, and I want a second.

Heart. I doubt I shall be but a very useless one to you; for I'm so disheartened by this wound Belinda has given me, I don't think I shall have courage enough to draw my sword.

Const. Oh, if that be all, come along; I'll warrant you find sword enough for such enemies as we have to deal withal.

SCENE III *.—*The Street before the Justice's House.*

Enter Constable and Watchmen, with Sir JOHN BRUTE.

Con. Come along, sir; I thought to have let you slip this morning, because you were a minister: but you are as drunk and abusive as ever. We'll see what the justice of the peace will say to you.

Sir John. And you shall see what I'll say to the justice of the peace, sirrah. *[They knock at the door.]*

Enter Servant.

Con. Pray acquaint his worship we have got an unruly parson here. We are unwilling to expose him, but don't know what to do with him.

Serv. I'll acquaint my master. *[Exit.]*

* See page 364.

Sir John. You—constable—what damned justice is this?

Con. One that will take care of you, I warrant you.

Enter Justice.

Just. Well, Mr. Constable, what's the disorder here?

Con. An't please your worship—

Sir John. Let me speak, and be damned!—I'm a divine, and can unfold mysteries better than you can do.

Just. Sadness, sadness! a minister so overtaken! Pray, sir, give the constable leave to speak, and I'll hear you very patiently; I assure you, sir, I will.

Sir John. Sir—you are a very civil magistrate: your most humble servant.

Con. An't please your worship then, he has attempted to beat the watch to-night, and swore—

Sir John. You lie!

Just. Hold, pray sir, a little.

Sir John. Sir, your very humble servant.

Con. Indeed, sir, he came at us without any provocation, called us whores and rogues, and laid us on with a great quarter-staff. He was in my lord Rake's company: they have been playing the devil to-night.

Just. Hem—hem—pray, sir—may you be chaplain to my lord?

Sir John. Sir—I presume—I may if I will.

Just. My meaning, sir, is—are you so?

Sir John. Sir—you mean very well.

Just. He—hem—hem—under favour, sir, pray answer me directly.

Sir John. Under favour, sir—do you use to answer directly when you are drunk?

Just. Good lack, good lack! here's nothing to be got from him.—Pray, sir, may I crave your name?

Sir John. Sir—my name's—*[He hiccups.]*—Hiccup, sir.

Just. Hiccup! Doctor Hiccup! I have known a great many country parsons of that name, especially down in the Fens.—Pray where do you live, sir?

Sir John. Here—and there, sir.

Just. Why, what a strange man is this!—Where do you preach, sir? have you any cure?

Sir John. Sir—I have—a very good cure—for a clap, at your service.

Just. Lord have mercy upon us!

Sir John. *[Aside.]* This fellow does ask so many impertinent questions, I believe, egad, 'tis the justice's wife in the justice's clothes.

Just. Mr. Constable, I vow and protest I don't know what to do with him.

Con. Truly he has been but a troublesome guest to us all night.

Just. I think I had e'en best let him go about his business, for I'm unwilling to expose him.

Con. E'en what your worship thinks fit.

Sir John. Sir—not to interrupt Mr. Constable, I have a small favour to ask.

Just. Sir, I open both my ears to you.

Sir John. Sir, your very humble servant. I have a little urgent business calls upon me; and therefore I desire the favour of you to bring matters to a conclusion.

Just. Sir, if I were sure that business were not to commit more disorders, I would release you.

Sir John. None—by my priesthood.

Just. Then, Mr. Constable, you may discharge him.

Sir John. Sir, your very humble servant. If you please to accept of a bottle—

Just. I thank you kindly, sir; but I never drink in a morning. Good bye to ye, sir, good bye to ye.

Sir John. Good bye t'ye, good sir.—[*Exit Justice.*] So—now, Mr. Constable, shall you and I go pick up a whore together?

Con. No, thank you, sir; my wife's enough to satisfy any reasonable man.

Sir John. [*Aside.*] He! he! he! he! he! he!—the fool is married then.—[*Aloud.*] Well, you won't go?

Con. Not I, truly.

Sir John. Then I'll go by myself; and you and your wife may be damned! [*Exit.*]

Con. [*Gazing after him.*] Why, God-a-mercy, parson! [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.—*Spring-Garden.*

CONSTANT and HEARTFREE cross the stage. *As they go off, Lady FANCYFUL and MADEMOISELLE enter masked, and dogging them.*

Const. So: I think we are about the time appointed. Let us walk up this way.

[*Exit with HEARTFREE.*]

Lady Fan. Good! Thus far I have dogged 'em without being discovered. 'Tis infallibly some intrigue that brings them to Spring-Garden. How my poor heart is torn and racked with fear and jealousy! Yet let it be anything but that flirt Belinda, and I'll try to bear it. But if it prove her, all that's woman in me shall be employed to destroy her.

[*Exit with MADEMOISELLE.*]

Re-enter CONSTANT and HEARTFREE. Lady FANCYFUL and MADEMOISELLE still following at a distance.

Const. I see no females yet that have anything to say to us. I'm afraid we are bantered.

Heart. I wish we were; for I'm in no humour to make either them or myself merry.

Const. Nay, I'm sure you'll make them merry enough if I tell 'em why you are dull. But prithee, why so heavy and sad before you begin to be ill used?

Heart. For the same reason, perhaps, that you are so brisk and well pleased; because both pains and pleasures are generally more considerable in prospect than when they come to pass.

Enter Lady BRUTE and BELINDA, masked, and poorly dressed.

Const. How now, who are these? Not our game, I hope.

Heart. If they are, we are e'en well enough served to come a hunting here, when we had so much better game in chase elsewhere.

Lady Fan. [*To MADEMOISELLE.*] So, those are their ladies without doubt. But I'm afraid that doily stuff is not worn for want of better clothes. They are the very shape and size of Belinda and her aunt.

Mad. So day be inteed, matam.

Lady Fan. We'll slip into this close arbour, where we may hear all they say.

[*Exeunt Lady FANCYFUL and MADEMOISELLE.*]

Lady Brute. What, are you afraid of us, gentlemen?

Heart. Why truly, I think we may, if appearance don't lie.

Bel. Do you always find women what they appear to be, sir?

Heart. No, forsooth; but I seldom find 'em better than they appear to be.

Bel. Then the outside's best, you think?

Heart. 'Tis the honestest.

Const. Have a care, Heartfree; you are relapsing again.

Lady Brute. Why, does the gentleman use to rail at women?

Const. He has done formerly.

Bel. I suppose he had very good cause for't.—They did not use you so well as you thought you deserved, sir.

Lady Brute. They made themselves merry at your expense, sir.

Bel. Laughed when you sighed.

Lady Brute. Slept while you were waking.

Bel. Had your porter beat.

Lady Brute. And threw your billets-doux in the fire.

Heart. Heyday! I shall do more than rail presently.

Bel. Why, you won't heat us, will you?

Heart. I don't know but I may.

Const. What the devil's coming here? Sir John in a gown?—and drunk i'faith.

Enter Sir JOHN BRUTE.

Sir John. What, a pox!—here's Constant, Heartfree—and two whores egad!—O you covetous rogues! what, have you never a spare punk for your friend?—But I'll share with you.

[*He seizes both the ladies.*]

Heart. Why, what the plague have you been doing, knight?

Sir John. Why, I have been beating the watch, and scandalising the clergy.

Heart. A very good account, truly!

Sir John. And what do you think I'll do next?

Const. Nay, that no man can guess.

Sir John. Why, if you'll let me sup with you, I'll treat both your strumpets.

Lady Brute. [*Aside.*] O Lord, we are undone!

Heart. No, we can't sup together, because we have some affairs elsewhere. But if you'll accept of these two ladies, we'll be so complaisant to you, to resign our right in 'em.

Bel. [*Aside.*] Lord, what shall we do?

Sir John. Let me see, their clothes are such damned clothes, they won't pawn for the reckoning.

Heart. Sir John, your servant. Rapture attend you.

Const. Adieu, ladies! make much of the gentleman.

Lady Brute. Why, sure you won't leave us in the hands of a drunken fellow to abuse us!

Sir John. Who do you call a drunken fellow, you slut you? I'm a man of quality; the king has made me a knight.

Heart. Ay, ay, you are in good hands. Adieu adieu!

[*Runs off.*]

Lady Brute. The devil's hands!—Let me go, or I'll—For Heaven's sake protect us!

[*She breaks from him, runs to CONSTANT, twitching off her mask, and clapping it on again.*]

Sir John. I'll devil you, you jade you! I'll demolish your ugly face!

Const. Hold a little, knight, she swoons.

Sir John I'll swoon her!

Const. Hey, Heartfree!

Re-enter HEARTFREE. BELINDA runs to him, and shows her face.

Heart. O Heavens! My dear creature, stand there a little.

Const. [*Aside to HEARTFREE.*] Pull him off, Jack.

Heart. Hold, mighty man; look you, sir, we did but jest with you. These are ladies of our acquaintance, that we had a mind to frighten a little, but now you must leave us.

Sir John. Oons, I won't leave you, not I!

Heart. Nay, but you must though; and therefore make no words on't.

Sir John. Then you are a couple of damned uncivil fellows: and I hope your punks will give you sauce to your mutton! [*Exit.*]

Lady Brute. Oh, I shall never come to myself again, I'm so frightened.

Const. 'Twas a narrow 'scape indeed.

Bel. Women must needs have frolics, you see, whatever they cost 'em.

Heart. This might have proved a dear one though.

Lady Brute. You are the more obliged to us, for the risk we run upon your accounts.

Const. And I hope you'll acknowledge something due to our knight-errantry, ladies. This is a second time we have delivered you.

Lady Brute. 'Tis true; and since we see fate has designed you for our guardians, 'twill make us the more willing to trust ourselves in your hands. But you must not have the worse opinion of us for our innocent frolic.

Heart. Ladies, you may command our opinions in everything that is to your advantage.

Bel. Then, sir, I command you to be of opinion, that women are sometimes better than they appear to be.

[*Lady BRUTE and CONSTANT talk apart.*]

Heart. Madam, you have made a convert of me in every thing. I'm grown a fool: I could be fond of a woman.

Bel. I thank you, sir, in the name of the whole sex.

Heart. Which sex nothing but yourself could ever have atoned for.

Bel. Now has my vanity a devilish itch to know in what my merit consists.

Heart. In your humility, madam, that keeps you ignorant it consists at all.

Bel. One other compliment with that serious face, and I hate you for ever after.

Heart. Some women love to be abused: is that it you would be at?

Bel. No, not that neither; but I'd have men talk plainly what's fit for women to hear; without putting 'em either to a real or an affected blush.

Heart. Why then, in as plain terms as I can find to express myself, I could love you even to—matrimony itself, a-most, egad.

Bel. Just as sir John did her ladyship there. What think you? Don't you believe one month's time might bring you down to the same indifference, only clad in a little better manners, perhaps? Well, you men are unaccountable things, mad till you have your mistresses, and then stark mad till you are rid of 'em again. Tell me, honestly, is

not your patience put to a much severer trial after possession than before?

Heart. With a great many, I must confess, it is, to our eternal scandal; but I—dear creature, do but try me.

Bel. That's the surest way, indeed, to know, but not the safest.—[*To Lady BRUTE.*] Madam, are not you for taking a turn in the Great Walk? It's almost dark, nobody will know us.

Lady Brute. Really I find myself something idle, Belinda; besides I dote upon this little odd private corner. But don't let my lazy fancy confine you.

Const. [*Aside.*] So, she would be left alone with me; that's well.

Bel. Well, we'll take our turn, and come to you again.—[*To HEARTFREE.*] Come, sir, shall we go pry into the secrets of the garden? Who knows what discoveries we may make?

Heart. Madam, I'm at your service.

Const. [*Aside to HEARTFREE.*] Don't make too much haste back; for, d'ye hear—I may be busy.

Heart. Enough. [*Exit with BELINDA.*]

Lady Brute. Sure you think me scandalously free, Mr. Constant. I'm afraid I shall lose your good opinion of me.

Const. My good opinion, madam, is like your cruelty, never to be removed.

Lady Brute. But if I should remove my cruelty, then there's an end of your good opinion.

Const. There is not so strict an alliance between 'em neither. 'Tis certain I should love you then better (if that be possible) than I do now; and where I love I always esteem.

Lady Brute. Indeed, I doubt you much. Why, suppose you had a wife, and she should entertain a gallant?

Const. If I gave her just cause, how could I justly condemn her?

Lady Brute. Ah, but you'd differ widely about just causes.

Const. But blows can bear no dispute.

Lady Brute. Nor ill manners much, truly.

Const. Then no woman upon earth has so just a cause as you have.

Lady Brute. Oh, but a faithful wife is a beautiful character.

Const. To a deserving husband I confess it is.

Lady Brute. But can his faults release my duty?

Const. In equity, without doubt. And where laws dispense with equity, equity should dispense with laws.

Lady Brute. Pray let's leave this dispute; for you men have as much witchcraft in your arguments as women have in their eyes.

Const. But whilst you attack me with your charms, 'tis but reasonable I assault you with mine.

Lady Brute. The case is not the same. What mischief we do we can't help, and therefore are to be forgiven.

Const. Beauty soon obtains pardon for the pain that it gives, when it applies the balm of compassion to the wound: but a fine face and a hard heart is almost as bad as an ugly face and a soft one; both very troublesome to many a poor gentleman.

Lady Brute. Yes, and to many a poor gentle woman too, I can assure you. But pray, which of 'em is it that most afflicts you?

Const. Your glass and conscience will inform you, madam. But for Heaven's sake! (for now I must be serious) if pity or if gratitude can move you:—[*Taking her hand*] if constancy and truth have power to tempt you: if love, if adoration can affect you, give me at least some hopes that time may do what you perhaps mean never to perform; 'twill ease my sufferings, though not quench my flame.

Lady Brute. Your sufferings eased, your flame would soon abate: and that I would preserve, not quench it, sir.

Const. Would you preserve it, nourish it with favours; for that's the food it naturally requires.

Lady Brute. Yet on that natural food 'twould surfeit soon, should I resolve to grant all you would ask.

Const. And in refusing all you starve it. Forgive me, therefore, since my hunger rages, if I at last grow wild, and in my frenzy force at least this from you.—[*Kissing her hand.*] Or if you'd have my flame soar higher still, then grant me this, and this, and this—[*Kissing first her hand, then her neck*],—and thousands more.—[*Aside.*] For now's the time, she melts into compassion.

Lady Brute. [*Aside.*] Poor coward virtue, how it shuns the battle.—[*Aloud.*] O Heavens! let me go.

Const. Ay, go, ay: where shall we go, my charming angel?—Into this private arbour.—Nay, let's lose no time—moments are precious.

Lady Brute. And lovers wild. Pray let us stop here; at least for this time.

Const. 'Tis impossible. He that has power over you can have none over himself.

[*As he is forcing her into the arbour, Lady FANCYFUL and MADEMOISELLE rush out upon them, and run over the stage.*]

Lady Brute. Ah, I'm lost!

Lady Fan. Fi! fi! fi! fi! fi!

Mad. Fi! fi! fi! fi! fi!

[*Exit with Lady FANCYFUL.*]

Const. Death and furies! who are these?

Lady Brute. O Heavens! I'm out of my wits: if they knew me, I am ruined.

Const. Don't be frightened! ten thousand to one they are strangers to you.

Lady Brute. Whatever they are, I won't stay here a moment longer.

Const. Whither will you go?

Lady Brute. Home, as if the devil were in me.—Lord! where's this Belinda now?

Re-enter BELINDA and HEARTFREE.

Oh! it's well you are come: I'm so frightened. my hair stands on end. Let's begone, for Heaven's sake!

Bel. Lord! what's the matter?

Lady Brute. The devil's the matter, we are discovered. Here's a couple of women have done the most impertinent thing!—Away! away! away! away! away!

[*Exit running, the others following.*]

Re-enter Lady FANCYFUL and MADEMOISELLE.

Lady Fan. Well, Mademoiselle, 'tis a prodigious thing how women can suffer filthy fellows to grow so familiar with 'em.

Mad. Ah, matam, il n'y a rien de si naturel.

Lady Fan. Fi! fi! fi! But oh my heart! O jealousy! O torture! I'm upon the rack. What shall I do? My lover's lost, I ne'er shall see him mine.—[*Pausing.*] But I may be revenged, and that's the same thing. Ah, sweet revenge! Thou welcome thought, thou healing balsam to my wounded soul, be but propitious on this one occasion, I'll place my heaven in thee for all my life to come.

To woman how indulgent nature's kind!

No blast of fortune long disturbs her mind

Compliance to her fate supports her still;

If love won't make her happy—mischief will.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT V.

SCENE I.—A Room in Lady FANCYFUL'S House.

Enter Lady FANCYFUL and MADEMOISELLE.

Lady Fan. Well, Mademoiselle; did you dog the filthy things?

Mad. O que oui, matam.

Lady Fan. And where are they?

Mad. Au logis.

Lady Fan. What, men and all?

Mad. Tous ensemble.

Lady Fan. O confidence! what, carry their fellows to their own house?

Mad. C'est que le mari n'y est pas.

Lady Fan. No, so I believe, truly. But he shall be there, and quickly too, if I can find him out. Well, 'tis a prodigious thing, to see when men and women get together, how they fortify one another in their impudence. But if that drunken fool, her husband, be to be found in e'er a tavern in town, I'll send him amongst 'em. I'll spoil their sport!

Mad. En vérité, matam, ce seroit dommage.

Lady Fan. 'Tis in vain to oppose it, Mademoiselle; therefore never go about it. For I am the steadiest creature in the world—when I have determined to do mischief. So, come along. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—A Room in Sir JOHN BRUTE'S House.

Enter CONSTANT, HEARTFREE, Lady BRUTE, BELINDA, and LOVEWELL.

Lady Brute. But are you sure you don't mistake, Lovewell?

Love. Madam, I saw 'em all go into the tavern together, and my master was so drunk he could scarce stand. [*Exit.*]

Lady Brute. Then, gentlemen, I believe we may venture to let you stay, and play at cards with us an hour or two: for they'll scarce part till morning

Bel. I think 'tis a pity they should ever part.

Const. The company that's here, madam.

Lady Brute. Then, sir, the company that's here must remember to part itself in time.

Const. Madam, we don't intend to forfeit your future favours by indiscreet usage of this. The moment you give us the signal, we shan't fail to make our retreat.

Lady Brute. Upon those conditions then let us sit down to cards.

Re-enter LOVEWELL.

Love. O Lord, madam! here's my master just staggering in upon you; he has been quarrelsome yonder, and they have kicked him out of the company.

Lady Brute. Into the closet, gentlemen, for Heaven's sake! I'll wheedle him to bed, if possible.

[CONSTANT and HEARTFREE run into the closet.]

Enter SIR JOHN BRUTE, all dirt and bloody.

Lady Brute. Ah—ah—he's all over blood!

Sir John. What the plague does the woman—squall for? Did you never see a man in pickle before?

Lady Brute. Lord, where have you been?

Sir John. I have been at—cuffs.

Lady Brute. I fear that is not all. I hope you are not wounded.

Sir John. Sound as a roach, wife.

Lady Brute. I'm mighty glad to hear it.

Sir John. You know—I think you lie.

Lady Brute. I know you do me wrong to think so. For Heaven's my witness I had rather see my own blood trickle down than yours.

Sir John. Then will I be crucified.

Lady Brute. 'Tis a hard fate I should not be believed.

Sir John. 'Tis a damned atheistical age, wife.

Lady Brute. I am sure I have given you a thousand tender proofs how great my care is of you. Nay, spite of all your cruel thoughts, I'll still persist, and at this moment, if I can, persuade you to lie down, and sleep a little.

Sir John. Why—do you think I am drunk—your slut, you?

Lady Brute. Heaven forbid I should: but I'm afraid you are feverish. Pray let me feel your pulse.

Sir John. Stand off, and be damned!

Lady Brute. Why, I see your distemper in your very eyes. You are all on fire. Pray go to bed; let me entreat you.

Sir John. Come kiss me, then.

Lady Brute. *[Kissing him.]* There: now go.—*[Aside.]* He stinks like poison.

Sir John. I see it goes damnably against your stomach—and therefore—kiss me again.

Lady Brute. Nay, now you fool me.

Sir John. Do't, I say.

Lady Brute. *[Aside.]* Ah, Lord have mercy upon me!—*[Kisses him.]* Well; there: now will you go?

Sir John. Now, wife, you shall see my gratitude. You give me two kisses—I'll give you—two hundred.

Lady Brute. O Lord! Pray sir John be quiet. Heavens, what a pickle am I in!

Bel. *[Aside.]* If I were in her pickle, I'd call my gallant out of the closet, and he should cudgel him soundly.

Sir John. So, now you being as dirty and as nasty as myself, we may go pig together. But first I must have a cup of your cold-tea, wife.

[Going to the closet.]

Lady Brute. *[Aside.]* Oh, I'm ruined!—*[Aloud.]* There's none there, my dear.

Sir John. I'll warrant you I'll find some, my dear.

Lady Brute. You can't open the door, the lock's spoiled; I have been turning and turning the key this half-hour to no purpose. I'll send for the smith to-morrow.

Sir John. There's ne'er a smith in Europe can open a door with more expedition than I can do.—As for example!—*Pou.*—*[He bursts open the door with his foot.]* How now! What the devil have we got here?—*Constant!*—*Heartfree!*—and two whores again, egad!—This is the worst cold-tea—that ever I met with in my life.—

Re-enter CONSTANT and HEARTFREE.

Lady Brute. *[Aside.]* O Lord what will become of us?

Sir John. Gentlemen—I am your very humble servant—I give you many thanks—I see you take care of my family—I shall do all I can to return the obligation.

Const. Sir, how oddly soever this business may appear to you, you would have no cause to be uneasy if you knew the truth of all things; your lady is the most virtuous woman in the world, and nothing has passed but an innocent frolic.

Heart. Nothing else, upon my honour, sir.

Sir John. You are both very civil gentlemen—and my wife, there, is a very civil gentlewoman; therefore I don't doubt but many civil things have passed between you. Your very humble servant!

Lady Brute. *[Aside to CONSTANT.]* Pray be gone: he's so drunk he can't hurt us to-night, and to-morrow morning you shall hear from us.

Const. *[Aside to LADY BRUTE.]* I'll obey you, madam.—*[Aloud.]* Sir, when you are cool, you'll understand reason better. So then I shall take the pains to inform you. If not—I wear a sword, sir, and so good-bye to you!—Come along, Heart-free.

[Exit CONSTANT and HEARTFREE.]

Sir John. Wear a sword, sir!—And what of all that, sir?—He comes to my house; eats my meat; lies with my wife; dishonours my family; gets a bastard to inherit my estate—and when I ask a civil account of all this—Sir, says he, I wear a sword.—Wear a sword, sir! Yes, sir, says he, I wear a sword.—It may be a good answer at cross-purposes; but 'tis a damned one to a man in my whimsical circumstances—Sir, says he, I wear a sword!—*[To LADY BRUTE.]* And what do you wear now? ha! tell me.—*[Sitting down in a great-chair.]* What! you are modest, and can't.—Why then I'll tell you, you slut you! You wear—an impudent lewd face—a damned designing heart—and a tail—and a tail full of—

[He falls fast asleep snoring.]

Lady Brute. So; thanks to kind Heaven, he's fast for some hours.

Bel. 'Tis well he is so, that we may have time to lay our story handsomely; for we must lie like the devil to bring ourselves off.

Lady Brute. What shall we say, Belinda?

Bel. *[Musing.]* I'll tell you: it must all light upon Heartfree and I. We'll say he has courted

me some time, but for reasons unknown to us has ever been very earnest the thing might be kept from sir John. That therefore hearing him upon the stairs he run into the closet, though against our will, and Constant with him, to prevent jealousy. And to give this a good impudent face of truth, (that I may deliver you from the trouble you are in), I'll e'en (if he pleases) marry him.

Lady Brute. I'm beholden to you, cousin; but that would be carrying the jest a little too far for your own sake. You know he's a younger brother, and has nothing.

Bel. 'Tis true: but I like him, and have fortune enough to keep above extremity. I can't say I would live with him in a cell, upon love and bread and butter: but I had rather have the man I love, and a middle state of life, than that gentleman in the chair there, and twice your ladyship's splendour.

Lady Brute. In truth, niece, you are in the right on't: for I am very uneasy with my ambition. But perhaps, had I married as you'll do, I might have been as ill used.

Bel. Some risk, I do confess, there always is: but if a man has the least spark, either of honour or good-nature, he can never use a woman ill, that loves him, and makes his fortune both. Yet I must own to you, some little struggling I still have with this teasing ambition of ours. For pride, you know, is as natural to a woman, as 'tis to a saint. I can't help being fond of this rogue; and yet it goes to my heart to think I must never whisk to Hyde-park with above a pair of horses; have no coronet upon my coach, nor a page to carry up my train. But above all—that business of place.—Well; taking place is a noble prerogative.

Lady Brute. Especially after a quarrel.

Bel. Or of a rival. But pray say no more on't for fear I change my mind. For o' my conscience, were't not for your affair in the balance, I should go near to pick up some odious man of quality yet, and only take poor Heartfree for a gallant.

Lady Brute. Then him you must have, however things go?

Bel. Yes.

Lady Brute. Why we may pretend what we will, but 'tis a hard matter to live without the man we love.

Bel. Especially when we are married to the man we hate. Pray tell me: do the men of the town ever believe us virtuous when they see us do so?

Lady Brute. Oh, no: nor indeed hardly, let us do what we will. They most of 'em think, there is no such thing as virtue, considered in the strictest notions of it: and therefore when you hear 'em say, such a one is a woman of reputation, they only mean she's a woman of discretion. For they consider we have no more religion than they have, nor so much morality; and between you and I, Belinda, I'm afraid the want of inclination seldom protects any of us.

Bel. But what think you of the fear of being found out?

Lady Brute. I think that never kept any woman virtuous long. We are not such cowards neither. No: let us once pass fifteen, and we have too good an opinion of our own cunning to believe the world can penetrate into what we would keep a secret. And so in short we cannot reasonably blame the men for judging of us by themselves.

Bel. But sure we are not so wicked as they are after all?

Lady Brute. We are as wicked, child, but our vice lies another way. Men have more courage than we, so they commit more bold impudent sins. They quarrel, fight, swear, drink, blaspheme, and the like; whereas we, being cowards, only back-bite, tell lies, cheat at cards, and so forth. But 'tis late: let's end our discourse for to-night, and out of an excess of charity take a small care of that nasty drunken thing there.—Do but look at him, Belinda.

Bel. Ah—'tis a savoury dish!

Lady Brute. As savoury as 'tis I'm cloyed with't. Prithee call the buttler to take it away.

Bel. Call the butler!—call the scavenger!—[*To a Servant within.*] Who's there? Call Rasor! Let him take away his master, scour him clean with a little soap and sand, and so put him to bed.

Lady Brute. Come, Belinda, I'll e'en lie with you to-night; and in the morning we'll send for our gentlemen to set this matter even.

Bel. With all my heart.

Lady Brute. Good night, my dear!

[*Making a low curtsy to Sir John.*]

Both. Ha! ha! ha!

[*Exeunt.*]

Enter RASOR.

Ras. My lady there's a wag—my master there's a cuckold. Marriage is a slippery thing:—women have depraved appetites:—my lady's a wag. I have heard all; I have seen all; I understand all; and I'll tell all; for my little Frenchwoman loves news dearly. This story'll gain her heart, or nothing will.—[*To his Master.*] Come, sir, your head's too full of fumes at present to make room for your jealousy; but I reckon we shall have rare work with you when your pate's empty. Come to your kennel, you cuckoldly drunken sot you!

[*Carries him out upon his back.*]

SCENE III.—*A Room in Lady FANCYFUL's House.*

Enter Lady FANCYFUL and MADemoisELLE.

Lady Fan. But why did not you tell me before, Mademoiselle, that Rasor and you were fond?

Mad. De modesty hinder me, matam.

Lady Fan. Why, truly, modesty does often hinder us from doing things we have an extravagant mind to. But does he love you well enough yet to do anything you bid him? Do you think to oblige you he would speak scandal?

Mad. Matam, to oblige your ladyship, he shall speak blasphemy.

Lady Fan. Why then, Mademoiselle, I'll tell you what you shall do. You shall engage him to tell his master all that passed at Spring-garden: I have a mind he should know what a wife and a niece he has got.

Mad. Il le fera, matam.

Enter a Footman, who speaks to MADemoisELLE apart.

Foot. Mademoiselle, yonder's Mr. Rasor desires to speak with you.

Mad. Tell him I come presently.—[*Exit Footman.*] Rasor be dare, matam.

Lady Fan. That's fortunate. Well, I'll leave you together. And if you find him stubborn, Mademoiselle—hark you—don't refuse him a few little reasonable liberties, to put him into humour.

Mad. Laissez-moi faire. [*Exit Lady FANCYFUL.*]

RASOR peeps in ; and seeing Lady FANCYFUL gone, runs to MADEMOISELLE, takes her about the neck, and kisses her.

Mad. How now, confidence !

Ras. How now, modesty !

Mad. Who make you so familiar, sirrah ?

Ras. My impudence, hussy.

Mad. Stand off, rogue-face.

Ras. Ah—Mademoiselle—great news at our house.

Mad. Why what be de matter ?

Ras. The matter !—why, uptails all's the matter.

Mad. Tu te moques de moi.

Ras. Now do you long to know the particulars—the time when—the place where—the manner how. But I won't tell you a word more.

Mad. Nay, den dou kill me, Rasor.

Ras. Come, kiss me, then.

[*Clapping his hands behind him.*]

Mad. Nay, pridee tell me.

Ras. Good bye to ye !

[*Going.*]

Mad. Hold, hold ! I will kiss dee. [*Kissing him.*]

Ras. So, that's civil. Why now, my pretty pall ; my goldfinch : my little waterwagtail—you must know that—Come, kiss me again.

Mad. I won't kiss dee no more.

Ras. Good b'wy to ye !

Mad. Doucement. Dare : es tu content ?

[*Kissing him.*]

Ras. So : now I'll tell thee all. Why the news is, that Cuckoldom in folio, is newly printed ; and Matrimony in quarto is just going into the press. Will you buy any books, Mademoiselle ?

Mad. Tu parles comme un libraire, de devil no understand dee.

Ras. Why then, that I may make myself intelligible to a waiting-woman, I'll speak like a valet-de-chambre. My lady has cuckolded my master.

Mad. Bon !

Ras. Which we take very ill from her hands, I can tell her that. We can't yet prove matter of fact upon her.

Mad. N'importe.

Ras. But we can prove that matter of fact had like to have been upon her.

Mad. Oui dà !

Ras. For we have such bloody circumstances.

Mad. Sans doute.

Ras. That any man of parts may draw tickling conclusions from 'em.

Mad. Port bien.

Ras. We have found a couple of tight well-built gentlemen stuffed into her ladyship's closet.

Mad. Le diable !

Ras. And I, in my particular person, have discovered a most damnable plot, how to persuade my poor master, that all this hide and seek, this will-in-the-wisp, has no other meaning than a Christian marriage for sweet Mrs. Belinda.

Mad. Un mariage !—Ah les drolesses !

Ras. Don't you interrupt me, hussy. 'Tis agreed, I say, and my innocent lady, to wriggle herself out at the back-door of the business, turns marriage-bawd to her niece, and resolves to deliver up her fair body, to be tumbled and mumbled, by

that young liquorish whipster Heartfree. Now are you satisfied ?

Mad. No.

Ras. Right woman ; always gaping for more.

Mad. Dis be all den dat dou know ?

Ras. All ! ay, and a great deal too, I think.

Mad. Dou be fool, dou know noting. Ecoute, mon pauvre Rasor. Dou see des two eyes ?—Des two eyes have see de devil.

Ras. The woman's mad !

Mad. In Spring-garden, dat rogue Constant meet dy lady.

Ras. Bon !

Mad. I'll tell dee no more.

Ras. Nay, prithe, my swan.

Mad. Come, kiss me den.

[*Clipping her hands behind her as he had done before.*]

Ras. I won't kiss you, not I.

Mad. Adieu !

Ras. Hold !—[*Gives her a hearty kiss.*] Now proceed.

Mad. Ah, ça !—I hide myself in one cunning place, where I hear all, and see all. First dy drunken master come mal à-propos ; but de sot no know his own dear wife, so he leave her to her sport.—Den de game begin. De lover say soft ting : de lady look upon de ground.—[*As she speaks, RASOR still acts the man, and she the woman.*] He take her by de hand : she turn her head on oder way. Den he squeeze very hard : den she pull—very softly. Den he take her in his arm : den she give him leetel pat. Den he kiss her tétons : den she say—Pish ! nay, fi ! Den he tremble : den she—sigh. Den he pull her into de arbour : den she pinch him.

Ras. Ay, but not so hard, you baggage you !

Mad. Den he grow bold : she grow weak. He tro her down, il tombe dessus, le diable assiste, il emporte tout.—[*RASOR struggles with her, as if he would throw her down.*] Stand off, sirrah.

Ras. You have set me a fire, you jade you !

Mad. Den go to de river and quench dyself.

Ras. What an unnatural harlot 'tis !

Mad. Rasor ! [*Looking languishing on him.*]

Ras. Mademoiselle !

Mad. Dou no love me ?

Ras. Not love thee !—more than a Frenchman does soup.

Mad. Den dou will refuse noting dat I bid dee ?

Ras. Don't bid me be damned then.

Mad. No, only tell dy master all I have tell dee of dy laty.

Ras. Why, you little malicious strumpet, you ; should you like to be served so ?

Mad. You dispute den ?—Adieu !

Ras. Hold !—But why wilt thou make me be such a rogue, my dear ?

Mad. Voilà un vrai Anglais ! il est amoureux, et cependant il veut raisonner. Va-t'en au diable !

Ras. Hold once more ! In hopes thou'lt give me up thy body, I resign thee up my soul.

Mad. Bon ! écoute donc—If dou fail me—I never see dee more.—If dou obey me—je m'abandonne à toi.

[*Takes him about the neck and gives him a smacking kiss, and exit.*]

Ras. [*Licking his lips.*] Not be a rogue ?—*Amor vincit omnia !* [*Exit.*]

SCENE IV.—*Another Room in the same.**Enter Lady FANCYFUL and MADEMOISELLE.*

Lady Fan. Marry, say ye? will the two things marry?

Mad. On le va faire, matam.

Lady Fan. Look you, Mademoiselle, in short, I can't bear it.—No; I find I can't.—If once I see 'em a-bed together, I shall have ten thousand thoughts in my head will make me run distracted. Therefore run and call Razor back immediately, for something must be done to stop this impertinent wedding. If I can defer it but four-and-twenty hours, I'll make such work about town, with that little pert slut's reputation, he shall as soon marry a witch.

Mad. [*Aside.*] La voilà bien intentionnée.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE V.—CONSTANT'S Lodgings.

Enter CONSTANT and HEARTFREE.

Const. But what dost think will come of this business?

Heart. 'Tis easier to think what will not come on't.

Const. What's that?

Heart. A challenge. I know the knight too well for that: his dear body will always prevail upon his noble soul to be quiet.

Const. But though he dare not challenge me, perhaps he may venture to challenge his wife.

Heart. Not if you whisper him in the ear, you won't have him do't, and there's no other way left that I see. For as drunk as he was, he'll remember you and I were where we should not be; and I don't think him quite blockhead enough yet to be persuaded we were got into his wife's closet only to peep in her prayer-book.

Enter Servant with a letter.

Serv. Sir, here's a letter; a porter brought it.

[*Exit.*]

Const. O ho! here's instructions for us.—[*Reads.*] *The accident that has happened has touched our invention to the quick. We would fain come off without your help, but find that's impossible. In a word, the whole business must be thrown upon a matrimonial intrigue between your friend and mine. But if the parties are not fond enough to go quite through with the matter, 'tis sufficient for our turn they own the design. We'll find pretences enough to break the match. Adieu!*—Well, woman for invention! How long would my blockhead have been a producing this!—Hey, Heartfree! What musing, man! prithee be cheerful. What sayest thou, friend, to this matrimonial remedy?

Heart. Why I say it's worse than the disease.

Const. Here's a fellow for you! There's beauty and money on her side, and love up to the ears on his; and yet—

Heart. And yet, I think, I may reasonably be allowed to boggle at marrying the niece, in the very moment that you are debauching the aunt.

Const. Why truly there may be something in that. But have not you a good opinion enough of your own parts to believe you could keep a wife to yourself?

Heart. I should have, if I had a good opinion enough of hers, to believe she could do as much by me. For to do 'em right, after all, the wife seldom rambles till the husband shows her the way.

Const. 'Tis true; a man of real worth scarce ever is a cuckold but by his own fault. Women are not naturally lewd, there must be something to urge 'em to it. They'll cuckold a churl, out of revenge; a fool, because they despise him; a beast, because they loathe him. But when they make bold with a man they once had a well-grounded value for, 'tis because they first see themselves neglected by him.

Heart. Nay, were I well assured that I should never grow sir John, I ne'er should fear Belinda'd play my lady. But our weakness, thou knowest, my friend, consists in that very change we so impudently throw upon (indeed) a steadier and more generous sex.

Const. Why, faith, we are a little impudent in that matter, that's the truth on't. But this is wonderful, to see you grown so warm an advocate for those (but t'other day) you took so much pains to abuse!

Heart. All revolutions run into extremes; the bigot makes the boldest atheist; and the coyest saint, the most extravagant strumpet. But prithee advise me in this good and evil, this life and death, this blessing and cursing, that is set before me. Shall I marry—or die a maid?

Const. Why faith, Heartfree, matrimony is like an army going to engage. Love's the forlorn hope, which is soon cut off; the marriage-knot is the main body, which may stand buff a long long time; and repentance is the rear-guard, which rarely gives ground as long as the main battle has a being.

Heart. Conclusion then; you advise me to whore on as you do?

Const. That's not concluded yet. For though marriage be a lottery, in which there are a wondrous many blanks; yet there is one inestimable lot, in which the only heaven on earth is written. Would your kind fate but guide your hand to that, though I were wrapped in all that luxury itself could clothe me with, I still should envy you.

Heart. And justly, too: for to be capable of loving one, doubtless is, better than to possess a thousand. But how far that capacity's in me, alas! I know not.

Const. But you would know?

Heart. I would so.

Const. Matrimony will inform you. Come, one flight of resolution carries you to the land of experience; where, in a very moderate time, you'll know the capacity of your soul and your body both, or I'm mistaken.

[*Exeunt*]SCENE VI.—*A Room in Sir JOHN BRUTE'S House.**Enter Lady BRUTE and BELINDA.*

Bel. Well, madam, what answer have you from 'em?

Lady Brute. That they'll be here this moment. I fancy 'twill end in a wedding: I'm sure he's a fool if it don't. Ten thousand pound, and such a lass as you are, is no contemptible offer to a younger brother. But are not you under strange agitations? Prithee how does your pulse beat?

Bel. High and low, I have much ado to be valiant : sure it must feel very strange to go to bed to a man !

Lady Brute. Um—it does feel a little odd at first, but it will soon grow easy to you.

Enter CONSTANT and HEARTFREE.

Lady Brute. Good-morrow, gentlemen ! How have you slept after your adventure ?

Heart. Some careful thoughts, ladies, on your accounts have kept us waking.

Bel. And some careful thoughts on your own, I believe, have hindered you from sleeping. Pray how does this matrimonial project relish with you ?

Heart. Why faith e'en as storming towns does with soldiers, where the hopes of delicious plunder banishes the fear of being knocked on the head.

Bel. Is it then possible after all that you dare think of downright lawful wedlock ?

Heart. Madam, you have made me so foolhardy I dare do anything.

Bel. Then, sir, I challenge you ; and matrimony's the spot where I expect you.

Heart. 'Tis enough ; I'll not fail.—[*Aside.*] So, now, I am in for Hobbes's voyage ; a great leap in the dark.

Lady Brute. Well, gentlemen, this matter being concluded then, have you got your lessons ready ? For sir John is grown such an atheist of late he'll believe nothing upon easy terms.

Const. We'll find ways to extend his faith, madam. But pray how do you find him this morning ?

Lady Brute. Most lamentably morose, chewing the cud after last night's discovery ; of which however he had but a confused notion e'en now. But I'm afraid the valet-de-chambre has told him all, for they are very busy together at this moment. When I told him of Belinda's marriage, I had no other answer but a grunt : from which you may draw what conclusions you think fit.—But to your notes, gentlemen, he's here.

Enter Sir JOHN BRUTE and RASOR.

Const. Good-morrow, sir.

Heart. Good-morrow, sir John. I'm very sorry my indiscretion should cause so much disorder in your family.

Sir John. Disorders generally come from indiscretions, sir ; 'tis no strange thing at all.

Lady Brute. I hope, my dear, you are satisfied there was no wrong intended you.

Sir John. None, my dove.

Bel. If not, I hope my consent to marry Mr. Heartfree will convince you. For as little as I know of amours, sir, I can assure you, one intrigue is enough to bring four people together, without further mischief.

Sir John. And I know, too, that intrigues tend to procreation of more kinds than one. One intrigue will beget another as soon as beget a son or a daughter.

Const. I am very sorry, sir, to see you still seem unsatisfied with a lady whose more than common virtue, I am sure, were she my wife, should meet a better usage.

Sir John. Sir, if her conduct has put a trick upon her virtue, her virtue's the bubble, but her husband's the loser.

Const. Sir, you have received a sufficient answer

already to justify both her conduct and mine. You'll pardon me for meddling in your family-affairs ; but I perceive I am the man you are jealous of, and therefore it concerns me.

Sir John. Would it did not concern me, and then I should not care who it concerned.

Const. Well, sir, if truth and reason won't content you, I know but one way more, which, if you think fit, you may take.

Sir John. Lord, sir, you are very hasty. If I had been found at prayers in your wife's closet, I should have allowed you twice as much time to come to yourself in.

Const. Nay, sir, if time be all you want, we have no quarrel.

Heart. [*Aside to CONSTANT.*] I told you how the sword would work upon him. [*Sir JOHN mutes.*]

Const. [*Aside to HEARTFREE.*] Let him muse ; however, I'll lay fifty pound our foreman brings us in, Not Guilty.

Sir John. [*Aside.*] 'Tis well—'tis very well.—In spite of that young jade's matrimonial intrigue, I am a downright stinking cuckold.—Here they are—Boo!—[*Putting his hand to his forehead.*] Methinks I could butt with a bull. What the plague did I marry her for ? I knew she did not like me ; if she had, she would have lain with me ; for I would have done so because I liked her : but that's past, and I have her. And now, what shall I do with her ?—If I put my horns in my pocket, she'll grow insolent.—If I don't, that goat there, that stallion, is ready to whip me through the guts.—The debate, then, is reduced to this ; shall I die a hero ? or live a rascal ?—Why, wiser men than I have long since concluded, that a living dog is better than a dead lion.—[*Aloud.*] Gentlemen, now my wine and my passion are governable, I must own, I have never observed anything in my wife's course of life to back me in my jealousy of her : but jealousy's a mark of love ; so she need not trouble her head about it, as long as I make no more words on't.

Enter Lady FANCYFUL disguised ; she addresses BELINDA apart.

Const. I'm glad to see your reason rule at last. Give me your hand : I hope you'll look upon me as you are wont.

Sir John. Your humble servant.—[*Aside.*] A wheedling son of a whore !

Heart. And that I may be sure you are friends with me too, pray give me your consent to wed your niece.

Sir John. Sir, you have it with all my heart : damn me if you han't !—[*Aside.*] 'Tis time to get rid of her :—a young pert pimp ! she'll make an incomparable bawd in a little time.

Enter a Servant, who gives HEARTFREE a letter.

Bel. Heartfree your husband, say you ? 'tis impossible.

Lady Fan. Would to kind Heaven it were : but 'tis too true ; and in the world there lives not such a wretch. I'm young ; and either I have been flattered by my friends, as well as glass, or nature has been kind and generous to me. I had a fortune too was greater far than he could ever hope for ; but with my heart I am robbed of all the rest. I'm slighted and I'm beggared both at once ; I have scarce a bare subsistence from the villain,

yet dare complain to none; for he has sworn, if e'er 'tis known I am his wife, he'll murder me.

[Pretends to weep.]

Bel. The traitor!

Lady Fan. I accidentally was told he courted you; charity soon prevailed upon me to prevent your misery; and as you see, I'm still so generous even to him, as not to suffer he should do a thing for which the law might take away his life.

[Pretends to weep.]

Bel. Poor creature! how I pity her!

[They continue talking aside.]

Heart. *[Aside.]* Death and damnation!—Let me read it again.—*[Reads.]* *Though I have a particular reason not to let you know who I am till I see you; yet you'll easily believe 'tis a faithful friend that gives you this advice—I have lain with Belinda.*—Good!—*I have a child by her.*—Better and better!—*which is now at nurse;*—Heaven be praised!—*and I think the foundation laid for another.*—Ha!—Old Truepenny!—*No rack could have tortured this story from me, but friendship has done it. I heard of your design to marry her, and could not see you abused. Make use of my advice, but keep my secret till I ask you for't again.* Adieu. *[Exit Lady FANCYFUL.]*

Const. *[To BELINDA.]* Come, madam, shall we send for the parson? I doubt here's no business for the lawyer. Younger brothers have nothing to settle but their hearts, and that I believe my friend here has already done very faithfully.

Bel. *[Scornfully.]* Are you sure, sir, there are no old mortgages upon it?

Heart. *[Coldly.]* If you think there are, madam, it mayn't be amiss to defer the marriage till you are sure they are paid off.

Bel. *[Aside.]* How the galled horse kicks!—*[To HEARTFREE.]* We'll defer it as long as you please, sir.

Heart. The more time we take to consider on't, madam, the less apt we shall be to commit oversights; therefore, if you please, we'll put it off for just nine months.

Bel. Guilty consciences make men cowards; I don't wonder you want time to resolve.

Heart. And they make women desperate; I don't wonder you were so quickly determined.

Bel. What does the fellow mean?

Heart. What does the lady mean?

Sir John. Zoons! what do you both mean?

[HEARTFREE and BELINDA walk chafing about.]

Ras. *[Aside.]* Here's so much sport going to be spoiled, it makes me ready to weep again. A pox o' this impertinent Lady Fanciful and her plots, and her Frenchwoman, too! she's a whimsical, ill-natured bitch; and when I have got my bones broke in her service, 'tis ten to one but my recompense is a clap; I hear 'em tittering without still. Ecod, I'll e'en go lug 'em both in by the ears, and discover the plot, to secure my pardon. *[Exit]*

Const. Prithee, explain, Heartfree.

Heart. A fair deliverance, thank my stars and my friend.

Bel. 'Tis well it went no farther; a base fellow!

Lady Brute. What can be the meaning of all this?

Bel. What's his meaning I don't know; but mine is, that if I had married him—I had had no husband.

Heart. And what's her meaning I don't know;

but mine is, that if I had married her—I had had wife enough.

Sir John. Your people of wit have got such cramp ways of expressing themselves, they seldom comprehend one another. Pox take you both! will you speak that you may be understood?

Re-enter RASOR, in sackcloth, pulling in Lady FANCYFUL and MADEMOISELLE, both masked.

Ras. If they won't, here comes an interpreter.

Lady Brute. Heavens! what have we here?

Ras. A villain—but a repenting villain. Stuff which saints in all ages have been made of.

All. Rasor!

Lady Brute. What means this sudden metamorphose?

Ras. Nothing, without my pardon.

Lady Brute. What pardon do you want?

Ras. *Imprimis,* your ladyship's; for a damnable lie made upon your spotless virtue, and set to the tune of Spring-Garden.—*[To Sir JOHN.]* Next, at my generous master's feet I bend, for interrupting his more noble thoughts with phantoms of disgraceful cuckoldom.—*[To CONSTANT.]* Thirdly, I to this gentleman apply for making him the hero of my romance.—*[To HEARTFREE.]* Fourthly, your pardon, noble sir, I ask, for clandestinely marrying you, without either bidding of banns, bishop's licence, friends' consent—or your own knowledge. *[To BELINDA.]* And lastly, to my good young lady's clemency I come, for pretending the corn was sowed in the ground, before ever the plough had been in the field.

Sir John. *[Aside.]* So that after all, 'tis a moot point, whether I am a cuckold or not.

Bel. Well, sir, upon condition you confess all, I'll pardon you myself, and try to obtain as much from the rest of the company. But I must know then who 'tis has put you upon all this mischief?

Ras. Satan and his equipage; woman tempted me, lust weakened me—and so the devil overcame me; as fell Adam, so fell I.

Bel. Then pray, Mr. Adam, will you make us acquainted with your Eve?

Ras. *[To MADEMOISELLE.]* Unmask, for the honour of France.

All. Mademoiselle!

Mad. Me ask ten thousand pardon of all de good company.

Sir John. Why this mystery thickens, instead of clearing up.—*[To RASOR.]* You son of a whore you, put us out of our pain.

Ras. One moment brings sunshine.—*[Pointing to MADEMOISELLE.]* 'Tis true this is the woman that tempted me; but this is the serpent that tempted the woman; and if my prayers might be heard, her punishment for so doing should be like the serpent's of old.—*[Pulls off Lady FANCYFUL's mask.]* She should lie upon her face all the days of her life.

All. Lady Fanciful!

Bel. Impertinent!

Lady Brute. Ridiculous!

All. Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!

Bel. I hope your ladyship will give me leave to wish you joy, since you have owned your marriage yourself.—*[To HEARTFREE.]* I vow 'twas strangely wicked in you to think of another wife, when you had one already so charming as her ladyship.

All. Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!

Lady Fan. [*Aside.*] Confusion seize 'em, as it seizes me!

Mad. [*Aside.*] Que le diable étouffe ce maraud de Rasor!

Bel. Your ladyship seems disordered; a breeding qualm, perhaps.—Mr. Heartfree, your bottle of Hungary water to your lady.—Why, madam, he stands as unconcerned as if he were your husband in earnest.

Lady Fan. Your mirth's as nauseous as yourself, Belinda. You think you triumph over a rival now: hélas! ma pauvre fille. Where'er I'm rival there's no cause for mirth. No, my poor wretch, 'tis from another principle I have acted. I knew that thing there would make so perverse a husband, and you so impertinent a wife, that lest your mutual plagues should make you both run mad, I charitably would have broke the match. He! he! he! he! he! he!

[*Exit laughing affectedly, MADemoiselle following her.*]

Mad. He! he! he! he! he! he!

All. Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!

Sir John. [*Aside.*] Why now this woman will be married to somebody too.

Bel. Poor creature! what a passion she's in! but I forgive her.

Heart. Since you have so much goodness for her, I hope you will pardon my offence too, madam.

Bel. There will be no great difficulty in that, since I am guilty of an equal fault.

Heart. Then pardons being passed on all sides, pray let's to church to conclude the day's work.

Const. But before you go, let me treat you, pray, with a song a new-married lady made within this week; it may be of use to you both.

SONG. —

When yielding first to Damon's flame,
I sunk into his arms;
He swore he'd ever be the same,
Then rifled all my charms.
But fond of what he had long desired,
Too greedy of his prey,
My shepherd's flame, alas! expired
Before the verge of day.

My innocence in lovers' wars,
Reproach'd his quick defeat;
Confused, ashamed, and bathed in tears,
I mourn'd his cold retreat.
At length, Ah shepherdess! cried he,
Would you my fire renew,
Alas! you must retreat like me,
I'm lost if you pursue!

Heart. So, madam; now had the parson but done his business—

Bel. You'd be half weary of your bargain.

Heart. No, sure, I might dispense with one night's lodging.

Bel. I'm ready to try, sir.

Heart. Then let's to church:

And if it be our chance to disagree—

Bel. Take heed—the surly husband's fate you see. [*Exeunt omnes.*]

EPILOGUE

(BY ANOTHER HAND)

SPOKEN BY LADY BRUTE AND BELINDA.

Lady Brute. No Epilogue!

Bel. I swear I know of none.

Lady Brute. Lord! How shall we excuse it to the town?

Bel. Why, we must e'en say something of our own.

Lady Brute. Our own! Ay, that must needs be precious stuff.

Bel. I'll lay my life, they'll like it well enough. Come, faith, begin—

Lady Brute. Excuse me: after you.

Bel. Nay, pardon me for that, I know my cue.

Lady Brute. Oh, for the world, I would not have precedence.

Bel. O Lord!

Lady Brute. I swear—

Bel. O fy!

Lady Brute. I'm all obedience.

First, then, know all, before our doom is fix'd,

The third day is for us—

Bel. Nay, and the sixth.

Lady Brute. We speak not from the poet now, nor is it

His cause—(I want a rhyme)

Bel. That we solicit.

Lady Brute. Then sure you cannot have the hearts to be severe,

And damn us—

Bel. Damn us! Let 'em if they dare.

Lady Brute. Why, if they should, what punishment remains?

Bel. Eternal exile from behind our scenes.

Lady Brute. But if they're kind, that sentence we'll recal,

We can be grateful—

Bel. And have wherewithal.

Lady Brute. But at grand treaties hope not to be trusted,

Before preliminaries are adjusted.

Bel. You know the time, and we appoint this place!

Where, if you please, we'll meet and sign the peace.

Upon the revival of this Play, in 1725, Sir John Vanbrugh thought proper to substitute the two following Scenes, in lieu of those printed in pages 351, 353.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—Covent-Garden.

Enter Lord RAKE, Sir JOHN BRUTE, Colonel BULLY, and others, with drawn swords.

Rake. Is the dog dead?

Bully. No, damn him! I heard him wheeze.

Rake. How the witch his wife howled!

Bully. Ay, she'll alarm the watch presently.

Rake. Appear, knight, then. Come, you have a good cause to fight for, there's a man murdered.

Sir John. Is there? Then let his ghost be satisfied; for I'll sacrifice a constable to it presently, and burn his body upon his wooden chair.

Enter a Tailor, with a bundle under his arm.

Bully. How now! what have we got here? a thief?

Tailor. No, an't please you, I'm no thief.

Rake. That we'll see presently. Here—let the general examine him.

Sir John. Ay, ay, let me examine him, and I'll lay a hundred pound I find him guilty in spite of his teeth—for he looks—like a—sneaking rascal. Come, sirrah, without equivocation or mental reservation, tell me of what opinion you are, and what calling; for by them—I shall guess at your morals.

Tail. An't please you, I'm a dissenting journeyman woman's tailor.

Sir John. Then, sirrah, you love lying by your religion, and theft by your trade; and so that your punishment may be suitable to your crimes—I'll have you first gagged—and then hanged.

Tail. Pray, good worthy gentlemen, don't abuse me; indeed I'm an honest man, and a good workman, though I say it that should not say it.

Sir John. No words, sirrah, but attend your fate.

Rake. Let me see what's in that bundle.

Tail. An't please you, it's my lady's short cloak and sack.

Sir John. What lady, you reptile, you?

Tail. My lady Brute, an't please your honour.

Sir John. My lady Brute! my wife! the robe of my wife! with reverence let me approach it. The dear angel is always taking care of me in danger, and has sent me this suit of armour to protect me in this day of battle. On they go!

All. O brave knight!

Rake. Live Don Quixote the second.

Sir John. Sancho, my squire, help me on with my armour.

Tail. O dear gentlemen! I shall be quite undone if you take the sack.

Sir John. Retire, sirrah! and since you carry off your skin, go home and be happy.

Tail. [*Aside.*] I think I'd e'en as good follow the gentleman's advice; for if I dispute any longer,

who knows but the whim may take 'em to case me.—These courtiers are fuller of tricks than they are of money; they'll sooner break a man's bones than pay his bills. [*Exit.*]

Sir John. So! how do you like my shapes now?

Rake. To a miracle! he looks like a queen of the Amazons.—But to your arms! Gentlemen! The enemy's upon their march—here's the watch—
Sir John. 'Oons! if it were Alexander the Great, at the head of his army, I would drive him into a horse-pond.

All. Huzza! O brave knight!

Enter Watchmen.

Sir John. See! here he comes, with all his Greeks about him.—Follow me, boys.

Watchman. Heyday! who have we got here. Stand!

Sir John. Mayhap not.

Watch. What are you all doing here in the streets at this time o' night? And who are you, madam, that seem to be at the head of this noble crew?

Sir John. Sirrah, I am Bonduca, queen of the Welchmen, and with a leek as long as my pedigree, I will destroy your Roman legion in an instant.—Britons, strike home!

[*They fight off.* Watchmen return with Sir John.

Watch. So, we have got the queen, however! We'll make her pay well for her ransom.—Come, madam, will your majesty please to walk before the constable?

Sir John. The constable's a rascal! and you are a son of a whore!

Watch. A most noble reply, truly! If this be her royal style, I'll warrant her maids of honour prattle prettily. But we'll teach you some of our court dialect before we part with you, princess.—Away with her to the Round-house.

Sir John. Hands off, you ruffians! My honour's dearer to me than my life; I hope you won't be uncivil.

Watch. Away with her!

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.—The Street before the Justice's House.

Enter Constable and Watchmen, with Sir JOHN BRUTE.

Constable. Come, forsooth, come along, if you please. I once in compassion thought to have seen you safe home this morning, but you have been so rampant and abusive all night, I shall see what the justice of peace will say to you.

Sir John. And you shall see what I'll say to the justice of peace. [*Watchman knocks at the door.*]

Enter Servant.

Con. Is Mr. Justice at home?

Serv. Yes.

Con. Pray acquaint his worship we have got an unruly woman here, and desire to know what he'll please to have done with her.

Serv. I'll acquaint my master. *[Exit.]*

Sir John. Hark you, constable, what cuckoldly justice is this?

Con. One that knows how to deal with such romps as you are, I'll warrant you.

Enter Justice.

Just. Well, Mr. Constable, what is the matter there?

Con. An't please your worship, this here comical sort of a gentlewoman has committed great outrages to-night. She has been frolicking with my lord Rake and his gang; they attacked the watch, and I hear there has been a man killed: I believe 'tis they have done it.

Sir John. Sir, there may have been murder for aught I know; and 'tis a great mercy there has not been a rape too—that fellow would have ravished me.

2 Watch. Ravish! ravish! O lud! O lud! O lud! Ravish her! why, please your worship, I heard Mr. Constable say he believed she was little better than a maphrodite.

Just. Why, truly, she does seem a little masculine about the mouth.

2 Watch. Yes, and about the hands too, an't please your worship. I did but offer in mere civility to help her up the steps into our apartment, and with her gripen fist—ay, just so, sir.

[Sir John knocks him down.]

Sir John. I felled him to the ground like an ox.

Just. Out upon this boisterous woman! Out upon her!

Sir John. Mr. Justice, he would have been uncivil! It was in defence of my honour, and I demand satisfaction.

2 Watch. I hope your worship will satisfy her honour in Bridewell; that fist of hers will make an admirable hemp-beater.

Sir John. Sir, I hope you will protect me against that libidinous rascal; I am a woman of quality and virtue too, for all I am in an undress this morning.

Just. Why, she has really the air of a sort of a woman a little something out of the common.—Madam, if you expect I should be favourable to you, I desire I may know who you are.

Sir John. Sir, I am anybody, at your service.

Just. Lady, I desire to know your name.

Sir John. Sir, my name's Mary.

Just. Ay, but your surname, madam?

Sir John. Sir, my surname's the very same with my husband's.

Just. A strange woman this!—Who is your husband, pray?

Sir John. Sir John.

Just. Sir John who?

Sir John. Sir John Brute.

Just. Is it possible, madam, you can be my lady Brute?

Sir John. That happy woman, sir, am I; only a little in my merriment to-night.

Just. I am concerned for sir John.

Sir John. Truly so am I.

Just. I have heard he's an honest gentleman.

Sir John. As ever drunk.

Just. Good lack! Indeed, lady, I'm sorry he has such a wife.

Sir John. I am sorry he has any wife at all.

Just. And so, perhaps, may he.—I doubt you have not given him a very good taste of matrimony.

Sir John. Taste, sir! Sir, I have scorned to stint him to a taste, I have given him a full meal of it.

Just. Indeed I believe so! But pray, fair lady, may he have given you any occasion for this extraordinary conduct?—does he not use you well?

Sir John. A little upon the rough sometimes.

Just. Ay, any man may be out of humour now and then.

Sir John. Sir, I love peace and quiet, and when a woman don't find that at home, she's apt sometimes to comfort herself with a few innocent diversions abroad.

Just. I doubt he uses you but too well. Pray how does he as to that weighty thing, money? Does he allow you what is proper of that?

Sir John. Sir, I have generally enough to pay the reckoning, if this son of a whore of a drawer would but bring his bill.

Just. A strange woman this!—Does he spend a reasonable portion of his time at home, to the comfort of his wife and children?

Sir John. He never gave his wife cause to repine at his being abroad in his life.

Just. Pray, madam, how may he be in the grand matrimonial point?—is he true to your bed?

Sir John. *[Aside.]* Chaste! oons! This fellow asks so many impertinent questions! egad I believe it is the justice's wife, in the justice's clothes.

Just. 'Tis a great pity he should have been thus disposed of.—Pray, madam, (and then I've done,) what may be your ladyship's common method of life? If I may presume so far.

Sir John. Why, sir, much that of a woman of quality.

Just. Pray how may you generally pass your time, madam? your morning for example.

Sir John. Sir, like a woman of quality.—I wake about two o'clock in the afternoon—I stretch—and make a sign for my chocolate.—When I have drank three cups—I slide down again upon my back, with my arms over my head, while my two maids put on my stockings.—Then, hanging upon their shoulders, I am trailed to my great chair, where I sit—and yawn—for my breakfast.—If it don't come presently, I lie down upon my couch to say my prayers, while my maid reads me the play-bills.

Just. Very well, madam.

Sir John. When the tea is brought in, I drink twelve regular dishes, with eight slices of bread and butter.—And half an hour after, I send to the cook to know if the dinner is almost ready.

Just. So, madam!

Sir John. By that time my head is half dressed, I hear my husband swearing himself into a state of perdition that the meat's all cold upon the table, to amend which, I come down in an hour more, and have it sent back to the kitchen, to be all dressed over again.

Just. Poor man!

Sir John. When I have dined, and my idle servants are presumptuously set down at their ease,

to do so too, I call for my coach, to go visit fifty dear friends, of whom I hope I shall never find one at home while I shall live.

Just. So, there's the morning and afternoon pretty well disposed of!—Pray, madam, how do you pass your evenings?

Sir John. Like a woman of spirit, sir, a great spirit. Give me a box and dice.—Seven's the main! Oons! Sir, I set you a hundred pound!—Why, do you think women are married now a days, to sit at home and mend napkins? Sir, we have nobler ways of passing time.

Just. Mercy upon us, Mr. Constable, what will this age come to?

Con. What will it come to, indeed, if such women as these are not set in the stocks?

Sir John. Sir, I have a little urgent business calls upon me; and therefore I desire the favour of you to bring matters to a conclusion.

Just. Madam, if I were sure that business were not to commit more disorders, I would release you.

Sir John. None,—by my virtue.

Just. Then, Mr. Constable, you may discharge her.

Sir John. Sir, your very humble servant. If you please to accept of a bottle—

Just. I thank you kindly, madam; but I never drink in a morning. Good-by-t'ye, madam, good-by-t'ye.

Sir John. Good-by-t'ye, good sir.—[*Exit Justice.*] So!—Now, Mr. Constable, shall you and I go pick up a whore together?

Con. No, thank you, madam; my wife's enough to satisfy any reasonable man.

Sir John. [*Aside.*] He! he! he! he! he!—the fool is married then.—[*Aloud.*] Well, you won't go?

Con. Not I, truly.

Sir John. Then I'll go by myself; and you and your wife may be damned. [*Exit.*]

Con. [*Gazing after him.*] Why God-a-mercy, lady! [*Exeunt.*]

Æ S O P.

A Comedy.

PREFACE.

To speak for a play if it can't speak for itself is vain; and if it can, 'tis needless. For one of these reasons (I can't yet tell which, for 'tis now but the second day of acting) I resolve to say nothing for Æsop, though I know he'd be glad of help; for let the best happen that can, his journey's up hill, with a dead English weight at the tail of him.

At Paris indeed he scrambled up something faster (for 'twas up hill there too) than I'm afraid he will do here: the French having more mercury in their heads, and less beef and pudding in their bellies. Our solidity may set hard, what their folly makes easy: for fools I own they are, you know we have found them so in the conduct of the war; I wish we may do so in the management of the peace: but that's neither Æsop's business nor mine.

This play, gentlemen (or one not much unlike it), was writ in French about six years since by one Monsieur Boursault; 'twas played at Paris by the French comedians, and this was its fate:—The first day it appeared, 'twas routed;—people seldom being fond of what they don't understand, their own sweet persons excepted. The second (by the help of some bold knight-errants) it rallied; the third it advanced; the fourth it gave a vigorous attack; and the fifth put all the feathers in town to the scamper, pursuing 'em on to the fourteenth, and then they cried out quarter.

'Tis not reasonable to expect Æsop should gain so great a victory here, since 'tis possible by fooling with his sword I may have turned the edge on't. For I confess in the translation I have not at all stuck to the original. Nay, I have gone farther: I have wholly added the fifth Act, and crowded a country gentleman into the fourth, for which I ask Monsieur Boursault's pardon with all my heart, but doubt I never shall obtain it for bringing him into such company. Though after all, had I been so complaisant to have waited on his play word for word, 'tis possible even that might not have ensured the success of it: for though it swam in France, it might have sunk in England. Their country abounds in cork, ours in lead.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

ÆSOP.

LEARCHUS, *Governor of Cyzicus*
ORONCES, *in love with EUPHRONIA.*

EUPHRONIA, *Daughter to LEARCHUS, in love with*
ORONCES.

DORIS, *her Nurse.*

A Priest, Musicians, Dancers, Servants, &c.

People who come to Æsop, upon several occasions,
independent one of another.

HOBSON, } *two Country Tradesmen.*
HUMPHRY, }

ROGER, *a Country Bumpkin.*

QUAINT, *a Herald,*

FRUITFUL, *an Innkeeper.*

MRS. FRUITFUL, *his Wife.*

SIR POLIDORUS HOGSTYE, *a Country Gentleman.*

HORTENSIA, *an affected learned Lady.*

AMINTA, *a lewd Mother.*

MRS. FORGEWILL, *a Scrivener's Widow.*

SCENE,—CYZICUS.

PROLOGUE.

GALLANTS! we never yet produced a play
With greater fears than this we act to-day;
Barren of all the graces of the stage,
Barren of all that entertains this age.
No hero, no romance, no plot, no show,
No rape, no bawdy, no intrigue, no beau:
There's nothing in't with which we use to please ye;
With downright dull instruction we're to tease ye:
The stage turns pulpit, and the world's so fickle,
The playhouse in a whim turns conventicle.
But preaching here must prove a hungry trade,
The patentees will find so, I'm afraid:

For though with heavenly zeal you all abound,
As by your lives and morals may be found;
Though every female here o'erflows with grace,
And chaste Diana's written in her face;
Though maids renounce the sweets of fornication,
And one lewd wife's not left in all the nation;
Though men grow true, and the foul fiend defy;
Though tradesmen cheat no more, nor lawyers lie;
Though not one spot be found on Levi's tribe,
Nor one soft courtier that will touch a bribe;
Yet in the midst of such religious days,
Sermons have never borne the price of plays.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A Room in LEARCHUS'S House.*

Enter LEARCHUS, EUPHRONIA, and DORIS.

Lear. At length I am blessed with the sight of the world's wonder, the delight of mankind, the incomparable Æsop.—You had time to observe him last night, daughter, as he sat at supper with me. Tell me how you like him, child; is he not a charming person?

Euph. Charming!

Lear. What sayest thou to him, Doris? Thou art a good judge, a wench of a nice palate.

Dor. You would not have me flatter, sir?

Lear. No, speak thy thoughts boldly.

Dor. Boldly, you say?

Lear. Boldly, I say.

Dor. Why then, sir, my opinion of the gentleman is, that he's uglier than an old beau.

Lear. How! Impudence.

Dor. Nay, if you are angry, sir, second thoughts are best; he's as proper as a pikeman, holds up his head like a dancing-master, has the shape of a barb, the face of an angel, the voice of a cherubim, the smell of a civet-cat—

Lear. In short, thou art fool enough not to be pleased with him.

Dor. Excuse me for that, sir; I have wit enough to make myself merry with him.

Lear. If his body's deformed, his soul is beautiful: would to kind Heaven, as he is, my daughter could but find the means to please him!

Euph. To what end, dear father?

Lear. That he might be your husband, dear daughter.

Euph. My husband! Shield me, kind Heaven!

Dor. Psha! he has a mind to make us laugh, that's all.

Lear. Æsop, then, is not worth her care, in thy opinion?

Dor. Why truly, sir, I'm always for making suitable matches, and don't much approve of breeding monsters. I would have nothing marry a baboon but what has been got by a monkey.

Lear. How darest thou liken so incomparable a man to so contemptible a beast?

Dor. Ah, the inconstancy of this world! Out of sight, out of mind. Your little monkey is scarce cold in his grave, and you have already forgot what you used so much to admire. Do but call him to remembrance, sir, in his red coat, new gloves, little hat, and clean linen; then discharge your conscience, utter the truth from your heart, and tell us whether he was not the prettier gentleman of the two.—By my virginity, sir, (though that's but a slippery oath you'll say,) had they made love to me together, Æsop should have worn the willow.

Lear. Since nothing but an animal will please thee, 'tis pity my monkey had not that virginity thou hast sworn by. But I, whom wisdom charms, even in the homeliest dress, can never think the much deserving Æsop unworthy of my daughter.

Dor. Now, in the name of wonder, what is't you so admire in him?

Lear. Hark, and thou shalt know; but you, Euphronia, be you more especially attentive.

'Tis true, he's plain; but that, my girl's, a trifle.

All manly beauty's seated in the soul;

And that of Æsop, envy's self must own

Outshines whate'er the world has yet produced.

Croesus, the prosperous favourite of Heaven;

Croesus, the happiest potentate on earth;

Whose treasure (though immense) is the least part

Of what he holds from Providence's care,

Leans on his shoulder as his grand support;

Admires his wisdom, dotes upon his truth,

And makes him pilot to imperial sway.

But in this elevated post of power,

What's his employ? where does he point his thoughts?

To live in splendour, luxury, and ease,

Do endless mischiefs, by neglecting good,

And build his family on others' ruins?

No:

He serves the prince, and serves the people too;

Is useful to the rich, and helps the poor;

There's nothing stands neglected, but himself.

With constant pain, and yet with constant joy,

From place to place throughout the realm he goes,

With useful lessons, form'd to every rank:

The people learn obedience from his tongue,

The magistrate is guided in command,

The prince is minded of a father's care;

The subject's taught the duty of a child.

And as 'tis dangerous to be bold with truth,

He often calls for fable to his aid,

Where under abject names of beasts and birds,

Virtue shines out, and vice is clothed in shame:

And thus by inoffensive wisdom's force,

He conquers folly wheresoe'er he moves!

This is his portrait.

Dor. A very good picture of a very ill face!

Lear. Well, daughter; what, not a word? Is it possible anything that I am father of can be untouched with so much merit?

Euph. My duty may make all things possible. But Æsop is so ugly, sir,

Lear. His soul has so much beauty in't, your reason ought to blind your eyes. Besides, my interest is concerned; his power alarms me. I know throughout the kingdom he's the scourge of evil magistrates; turns out governors when they turn tyrants; breaks officers for false musters; excludes judges from giving sentence when they have been absent during the trial; hangs lawyers when they take fees on both sides; forbids physicians to take money of those they don't cure. 'Tis true, my innocence ought to banish my fears: but my government, child, is too delicious a morsel not to set many a frail mouth a-watering. Who knows what accusations envy may produce? But all would be secure, if thou couldst touch the heart of Æsop. Let me blow up thy ambition, girl; the fire of that will make thy eyes sparkle at him.—[*EUPHRONIA sighs.*] What's that sigh for now? Ha!—A young husband, by my conscience! Ah, daughter, hadst thou a young husband, he'd make thee sigh indeed. I'll tell thee what he's composed of. He has a wig full of pulvilio, a pocket full of dice, a heart full of treason, a mouth full of lies, a belly full of drink, a carcass full of plasters, a tail

full of pox, and a head full of—nothing. There's his picture; wear it at thy heart if thou canst. But here comes one of greater worth.

Enter ÆSOP.

Lear. Good morning to my noble lord! your excellency—

Æsop. Softly, good governor:
I'm a poor wanderer from place to place;
Too weak to train the weight of grandeur with me.
The name of excellency's not for me.

Lear. My noble lord, 'tis due to your employ;
Your predecessors all—

Æsop. My predecessors all deserved it, sir,
They were great men in wisdom, birth, and service;
Whilst I, a poor, unknown, decrepit wretch,
Mounted aloft for Fortune's pastime,
Expect each moment to conclude the farce,
By sinking to the mud from whence I sprung.

Lear. Great Cæsar's gratitude will still support
His coffers all are open to your will, [you;
Your future fortune's wholly in your power.

Æsop. But 'tis a power that I shall ne'er employ.

Lear. Why so, my lord?

Æsop. I'll tell you, sir.

A hungry goat, who had not eat
Some nights and days—(for want of meat)
Was kindly brought at last,
By Providence's care,
To better cheer,
After a more than penitential fast.
He found a barn well stored with grain,
To enter in required some pain;
But a delicious bait
Makes the way easy, though the pass is strait.
Our guest observing various meats,
He puts on a good modish face,
He takes his place,
He ne'er says grace,
But where he likes, he there falls to and eats.
At length with jaded teeth and jaws,
He made a pause,
And finding still some room,
Fell to as he had done before,
For time to come laid in his store;
And when his guts could hold no more,
He thought of going home.
But here he met the glutton's curse;
He found his belly grown so great,
'Twas vain to think of a retreat,
Till he had render'd all he'd eat,
And well he fared no worse.

To the application, governor.

Lear. 'Tis easy to be made, my lord.

Æsop. I'm glad on't. Truth can never be too clear. [Seeing EUPHRONIA.]

Is this young damsel your fair daughter, sir?

Lear. 'Tis my daughter, my good lord. Fair too, if she appears such in the eyes of the unerring Æsop.

Æsop. I never saw so beautiful a creature.

[Going up to salute her.]

Lear. [Aside.] Now's the time; kiss, soft girl, and fire him.

Æsop. How partial's nature 'twixt her form and mine! [Gazing at her.]

Lear. [Aside.] Look, look, look, how he gazes at her!—Cupid's hard at work, I see that already. Slap; there he hits him!—If the wench would but do her part.—But see, see, how the perverse young

baggage stands biting her thumbs, and won't give him one kind glance!—Ah the sullen jade! Had it been a handsome strong dog of five-and-twenty, she'd a fallen a coquetting on't, with every inch about her. But maybe it's I that spoil sport, I'll make a pretence to leave 'em together.—[Aloud.] Will your lordship please to drink any coffee this morning?

Æsop. With all my heart, governor.

Lear. Your lordship will give me leave to go and order it myself; for unless I am by, 'tis never perfect.

Æsop. Provided you leave me this fair maid in hostage for your return, I consent.

Lear. My good lord does my daughter too much honour.—[Aside.] Ah, that the wench would but do her part!—[Aside to EUPHRONIA.] Hark you, hussy! You can give yourself airs sometimes, you know you can. Do you remember what work you made with yourself at church t'other day? Play your tricks over again once more for my pleasure, and let me have a good account of this statesman. or, d'ye hear?—you shall die a maid; go chew upon that; go. [Exit.]

Æsop. Here I am left, fair damsel, too much exposed to your charms, not to fall your victim.

Euph. Your fall will then be due to your own weakness, sir; for Heaven's my witness, I neither endeavour nor wish to wound you.

Æsop. I understand you, lady; your heart's already disposed of, 'tis seldom otherwise at your age.

Euph. My heart disposed of!

Dor. Nay, never mince the matter, madam.

The gentleman looks like a civil gentleman, e'en confess the truth to him. He has a good interest with your father, and no doubt will employ it to break the heathenish match he proposes to you.—

[To ÆSOP.] Yes, sir, my young lady has been in love these two years, and that with as pretty a fellow as ever entered a virgin's heart; tall, straight, young, vigorous, good clothes, long periwig, clean linen; in brief, he has everything that's necessary to set a young lady a-longing, and to stay it when he has done. But her father, whose ambition makes him turn fool in his old age, comes with a back stroke upon us, and spoils all our sport. Would you believe it, sir! he has proposed to her to-day the most confounded ugly fellow. Look, if the very thoughts of him don't set the poor thing a-crying? And you, sir, have so much power with the old gentleman, that one word from you would set us all right again. If he will have her a wife, in the name of Venus let him provide her a handsome husband, and not throw her into the paws of a thing that nature in a merry humour has made half man, half monkey.

Æsop. Pray what's this monster's name, lady?

Euph. No matter for his name, sir; my father will know who you mean at first word.

Æsop. But you should not always choose by the outside alone; believe me, fair damsel, a fine periwig keeps many a fool's head from the weather. Have a care of your young gallant.

Dor. There's no danger, I have examined him; his inside's as good as his out; I say he has wit, and I think I know.

Euph. Nay, she says true; he's even a miracle of wit and beauty: did you but see him, you'd be yourself my rival.

Æsop. Then you are resolved against the monster.

Dor. Fy, sir, fy! I wonder you'll put her in mind of that foul frightful thing. We shall have her dream of nothing all night but bats and owls, and toads and hedgehogs, and then we shall have such a squeaking and squalling with her, the whole house will be in an uproar: therefore, pray sir, name him no more, but use your interest with her father that she may never hear of him again.

Æsop. But if I should be so generous to save you from the old gallant, what shall I say for your young one?

Euph. Oh, sir, you may venture to enlarge upon his perfections; you need not fear saying too much in his praise.

Dor. And pray, sir, be as copious upon the defects of t'other; you need not fear outrunning the text there neither, say the worst you can.

Euph. You may say the first is the most graceful man that Asia ever brought forth.

Dor. And you may say the latter is the most deformed monster that copulation ever produced.

Euph. Tell him that Oronces (for that's his dear name) has all the virtues that compose a perfect hero.

Dor. And tell him that Pigmy has all the vices that go to equip an attorney.

Euph. That to one I could be true to the last moment of my life.

Dor. That for t'other she'd cuckold him the very day of her marriage.—This, sir, in few words, is the theme you are desired to preach upon.

Æsop. I never yet had one that furnished me more matter.

Enter Servant.

Ser. My lord, there's a lady below desires to speak with your honour.

Æsop. What lady?

Ser. It's my lady—my lady—[*To Doris.*] The lady there, the wise lady, the great scholar, that nobody can understand.

Dor. O ho, is it she? pray let's withdraw, and oblige her, madam; she's ready to swoon at the insipid sight of one of her own sex.

Euph. You'll excuse us, sir, we leave you to wiser company. [*Exit EUPHRONIA and DORIS.*]

Enter HORTENSIA.

Hort. The Déesse who from Atropos's breast preserves
The names of heroes and their actions,
Proclaims your fame throughout this mighty orb,
And—

Æsop. [*Aside.*] Shield me, my stars! what have you sent me here?—[*Aloud.*] For pity's sake, good lady, be more humane: my capacity is too heavy to mount to your style: if you would have me know what you mean, please to come down to my understanding.

Hort. I've something in my nature soars too high
For vulgar flight, I own;
But Æsop's sphere must needs be within call;
Æsop and I may sure converse together.
I know he's modest, but I likewise know
His intellects are categorical.

Æsop. Now, by my faith, lady, I don't know what *intellect* is; and methinks *categorical* sounds as if you called me names. Pray speak that you

may be understood; language was designed for it, indeed it was.

Hort. Of vulgar things, in vulgar phrase we talk;
But when of Æsop we must speak,
The theme's too lofty for an humble style:
Æsop is sure no common character.

Æsop. No, truly, I am something particular.
Yet, if I am not mistaken, what I have extraordinary about me, may be described in very homely language. Here was a young gentlewoman but just now pencilled me out to a hair, I thought; and yet, I vow to Gad, the learned'st word I heard her make use of, was monster.

Hort. That was a woman, sir, a very woman;
Her cogitations all were on the outward man:
But I strike deeper, 'tis the mind I view.
The soul's the worthy object of my care;
The soul, that sample of divinity,
That glorious ray of heavenly light. The soul,
That awful throne of thought, that sacred seat
Of contemplation. The soul, that noble source
Of wisdom, that fountain of comfort, that spring
of joy,

That happy token of eternal life:

The soul, that—

Æsop. Pray, lady, are you married?

Hort. Why that question, sir?

Æsop. Only that I might wait upon your husband to wish him joy.

Hort. When people of my composition would marry, they first find something of their own species to join with; I never could resolve to take a thing of common fabric to my bed, lest when his brutish inclinations prompt him, he should make me mother to a form like his own.

Æsop. Methinks a lady so extremely nice, should be much at a loss who to converse with.

Hort. Sir I keep my chamber, and converse with myself; 'tis better being alone, than to misally one's conversation. Men are scandalous, and women are insipid: discourse without figure makes me sick at my soul: Oh the charms of a metaphor! What harmony there is in words of erudition! The music of them is unimaginable.

Æsop. Will you hear a fable, lady?

Hort. Willingly, sir; the apology pleases me when the application of it is just.

Æsop. It is, I'll answer for it.

Once on a time, a nightingale

To changes prone;

Unconstant, fickle, whimsical,

(A female one)

Who sung like others of her kind,

Hearing a well-taught linnet's airs,

Had other matters in her mind,

To imitate him she prepares.

Her fancy straight was on the wing:

"I fly," quoth she,

"As well as he;

I don't know why

I should not try

As well as he to sing."

From that day forth she changed her note,

She spoil'd her voice, she strain'd her throat

She did, as learned women do,

Till every thing

That heard her sing,

Would run away from her—as I from you.

[*Exit, running.*]

Hort. How grossly does this poor world suffer itself to be imposed upon!—*Æsop*, a man of sense!—Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! Alas, poor wretch! I should not have known him but by his deformity, his soul's as nauseous to my understanding, as his odious body to my sense of feeling. Well,

'Mongst all the wits that are allow'd to shine, Methinks there's nothing yet approaches mine : Sure I was sent the homely age to adorn ; What star, I know not, ruled when I was born, But everything besides myself's my scorn.

[*Exit.*]

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A Room in LEARCHUS'S House.*

Enter EUPHRONIA and DORIS.

Dor. What in the name of Jove's the matter with you? Speak, for Heaven's sake!

Euph. Oh! what shall I do? *Doris*, I'm undone.

Dor. What, ravished?

Euph. No, ten times worse! ten times worse! Unlace me, or I shall swoon.

Dor. Unlace you! why you are not thereabouts, I hope?

Euph. No, no; worse still; worse than all that.

Dor. Nay, then it's bad indeed.—[*Doris unlaces her.*] There, how d'ye do now?

Euph. So; it's going over.

Dor. Courage, pluck up your spirits! Well, now what's the matter!

Euph. The matter! thou sha't hear. Know that—that cheat—*Æsop*—

Dor. Like enough; speak! What has he done? that ugly ill-boding Cyclops.

Euph. Why, instead of keeping his promise, and speaking for *Oronces*, he has not said one word but what has been for himself. And by my father's order, before to-morrow noon he's to marry me.

Dor. He marry you!

Euph. Am I in the wrong to be in this despair? Tell me, *Doris*, if I am to blame?

Dor. To blame! no, by my troth. That ugly, old, treacherous piece of vermin! that melancholy mixture of impotence and desire! does his mouth stand to a young partridge! ah, the old goat! And your father!—he downright dotes at last then.

Euph. Ah, *Doris*; what a husband does he give me! and what a lover does he rob me of! Thou knowest 'em both; think of *Oronces*, and think of *Æsop*.

Dor. [*Spitting.*] A foul monster! And yet, now I think on't, I'm almost as angry at t'other too. Methinks he makes but a slow voyage on't for a man in love: 'tis now above two months since he went to *Lesbos*, to pack up the old bones of his dead father; sure he might have made a little more haste.

Enter ORONCES.

Euph. Oh! my heart; what do I see?

Dor. Talk of the devil, and he's at your elbow.

Oron. My dear soul!

[*EUPHRONIA runs and leaps about his neck.*]

Euph. Why would you stay so long from me?

Oron. 'Twas not my fault indeed; the winds—

Dor. The winds! Will the winds blow you your mistress again? We have had winds too, and waves into the bargain, storms and tempests, sea monsters, and the devil and all. She struggled as long as she could, but a woman can do no more

than she can do; when her breath was gone, down she sunk.

Oron. What's the meaning of all this?

Dor. Meaning! There's meaning and mumping too: your mistress is married, that's all.

Oron. Death and furies!

Euph. [*Clinging about him.*] Don't you frighten him too much, neither, *Doris*.—No, my dear, I'm not yet executed, though I'm condemned.

Oron. Condemned! to what? Speak! quick!

Dor. To be married.

Oron. Married! When? how? where? to what? to whom?

Dor. *Æsop!* *Æsop!* *Æsop!* *Æsop!* *Æsop!*

Oron. Fiends and spectres! What! that piece of deformity! that monster! that crump!

Dor. The same, sir, the same.—I find he knows him.—You might have come home sooner.

Oron. Dear *Euphronia*, ease me from my pain. Swear that you neither have nor will consent.

I know this comes from your ambitious father; But you're too generous, too true to leave me: Millions of kingdoms ne'er would shake my faith, And I believe your constancy as firm.

Euph. You do me justice, you shall find you do: For racks and tortures, crowns and sceptres join'd, Shall neither fright me from my truth, nor tempt Me to be false. On this you may depend.

Dor. Would to the Lord you would find some other place to make your fine speeches in! Don't you know that our dear friend *Æsop's* coming to receive his visits here? In this great downy chair your pretty little husband-elect is to sit and hear all the complaints of the town: one of wisdom's chief recompenses being to be constantly troubled with the business of fools.—Pray, madam, will you take the gentleman by the hand, and lead him into your chamber; and when you are there, don't lie whining, and crying, and sighing, and wishing—[*Aside.*] If he had not been more modest than wise, he might have set such a mark upon the goods before now, that ne'er a merchant of 'em all would have bought 'em out of his hands. But young fellows are always in the wrong: either so impudent they are nauseous, or so modest they are useless.—[*Aloud.*] Go, pray get you gone together.

Euph. But if my father catch us, we are ruined.

Dor. By my conscience, this love will make us all turn fools! Before your father can open the door, can't he slip down the back-stairs? I'm sure he may, if you don't hold him; but that's the old trade. Ah—well, get you gone, however.—Hark! I hear the old baboon cough; away!—[*Exeunt ORONCES and EUPHRONIA running.*] Here he comes, with his ugly beak before him! Ah—a luscious bedfellow, by my troth!

Enter LEARCHUS and ÆSOP.

Lear. Well, Doris, what news from my daughter? Is she prudent?

Dor. Yes, very prudent.

Lear. What says she? what does she do?

Dor. Do? what should she do? Tears her cornet; bites her thumbs; throws her fan in the fire; thinks it's dark night at noon-day; dreams of monsters and hobgoblins; raves in her sleep of forced marriage and cuckoldom; cries Avaunt Deformity! then wakens of a sudden, with fifty arguments at her fingers' ends, to prove the lawfulness of rebellion in a child, when a parent turns tyrant.

Lear. Very fine! but all this shan't serve her turn.—I have said the word, and will be obeyed.—My lord does her honour.

Dor. [*Aside.*] Yes, and that's all he can do to her.—[*To LEARCHUS.*] But I can't blame the gentleman, after all; he loves my mistress because she's handsome, and she hates him because he's ugly. I never saw two people more in the right in my life.—[*To ÆSOP.*] You'll pardon me, sir, I'm somewhat free.

Æsop. Why, a ceremony would but take up time.—But, governor, methinks I have an admirable advocate about your daughter.

Lear. Out of the room, Impudence! begone, I say!

Dor. So I will; but you'll be as much in the wrong when I am gone as when I am here: and your conscience, I hope, will talk as pertly to you as I can do.

Æsop. If she treats me thus before my face, I may conclude I'm finely handled behind my back.

Dor. I say the truth here, and I can say no worse anywhere. [*Exit.*]

Lear. I hope your lordship won't be concerned at what this prattling wench bleats out; my daughter will be governed, she's bred up to obedience. There may be some small difficulty in weaning her from her young lover; but 'twon't be the first time she has been weaned from a breast, my lord.

Æsop. Does she love him fondly, sir?

Lear. Foolishly, my lord.

Æsop. And he her?

Lear. The same.

Æsop. Is he young?

Lear. Yes, and vigorous.

Æsop. Rich?

Lear. So, so.

Æsop. Well-born?

Lear. He has good blood in his veins.

Æsop. Has he wit?

Lear. He had, before he was in love.

Æsop. And handsome with all this?

Lear. Or else we should not have half so much trouble with him.

Æsop. Why do you then make her quit him for me? All the world knows I am neither young, noble, nor rich; and as for my beauty—look you, governor, I'm honest. But when children cry, they tell 'em Æsop's a-coming. Pray, sir, what is it makes you so earnest to force your daughter?

Lear. Am I then to count for nothing the favour you are in at court? Father-in-law to the great Æsop! What may I not aspire to? My foolish daughter, perhaps, mayn't be so well pleased with't, but we wise parents usually weigh our children's happiness in the scale of our own inclinations.

Æsop. Well, governor, let it be your care, then, to make her consent.

Lear. This moment, my lord, I reduce her either to obedience, or to dust and ashes. [*Exit.*]

Æsop. Adieu!—[*Calls to a Servant.*] Now let in the people who come for audience.

[*Sits himself in his chair, reading papers.*]

Enter HOBSON and HUMPHRY.

Hob. There he is, neighbour, do but look at him.

Hum. Ay, one may know him, he's well marked. But, dost hear me? what title must we give him? for if we fail in that point, d'ye see me, we shall never get our business done. Courtiers love titles almost as well as they do money, and that's a bold word now.

Hob. Why, I think we had best call him his Grandeur.

Hum. That will do; thou hast hit on't. Hold still, let me speak.—May it please your grandeur—

Æsop. There I interrupt you, friend; I have a weak body that will ne'er be able to bear that title.

Hum. D'ye hear that, neighbour? what shall we call him now?

Hob. Why, call him,—call him—his Excellency; try what that will do.

Hum. May it please your excellency—

Æsop. Excellency's a long word; it takes up too much time in business. Tell me what you'd have in few words.

Hum. Neighbour, this man will never give ten thousand pounds to be made a lord. But what shall I say to him now? He puts me quite out of my play.

Hob. Why e'en talk to him as we do to one another.

Hum. Shall I? why so I will then.—Hem! Neighbour; we want a new governor, neighbour.

Æsop. A new governor, friend!

Hum. Ay, friend.

Æsop. Why, what's the matter with your old one?

Hum. What's the matter? Why he grows rich; that's the matter: and he that's rich, can't be innocent; that's all.

Æsop. Does he use any of you harshly? or punish you without a fault?

Hum. No, but he grows as rich as a miser, his purse is so crammed, it's ready to burst again.

Æsop. When 'tis full 'twill hold no more. A new governor will have an empty one.

Hum. 'Fore Gad, neighbour, the little gentleman's in the right on't!

Hob. Why truly I don't know but he may. For now it comes in my head. It cost me more money to fat my hog, than to keep him fat when he was so. Prithce, tell him we'll e'en keep our old governor.

Hum. I'll do't.—Why, look you, sir, d'ye see me? having seriously considered of the matter, my neighbour Hobson, and I here, we are content to jog on a little longer with him we have: but if you'd do us another courtesy, you might.

Æsop. What's that, friend?

Hum. Why that's this: our king Croesus is a very good prince, as a man may say:—but—a—but—taxes are high, an't please you; and—a—poor men want money, d'ye see me. It's very hard, as we think, that the poor should work to maintain the rich. If there were no taxes, we should do pretty well.

Hob. Taxes indeed are very burdensome.
Æsop. I'll tell you a story, countrymen.

Once on a time, the hands and feet,
 As mutineers, grew mighty great;
 They met, caball'd, and talk'd of treason,
 They swore by Jove they knew no reason
 The belly should have all the meat;
 It was a damn'd notorious cheat,
 They did the work, and—death and hell, they'd
 eat!

The belly, who adored good cheer,
 Had like to have died away for fear:
 Quoth he, "Good folks, you little know
 What 'tis you are about to do;
 If I am starved, what will become of you?"

"We neither know nor care," cried they;
 "But this we will be bold to say,
 We'll see you damn'd
 Before we'll work,
 And you receive the pay."

With that the hands to pocket went,
 Full wristband deep,
 The legs and feet fell fast asleep:
 Their liberty they had redeem'd,
 And all except the belly seem'd
 Extremely well content.

But mark what follow'd; 'twas not long
 Before the right became the wrong,
 The mutineers were grown so weak,
 They found 'twas more than time to squeak:
 They call for work, but 'twas too late.
 The stomach (like an aged maid,
 Shrunk up for want of human aid,
 The common debt of nature paid,
 And with its destiny entrain'd their fate.

What think you of this story, friends, ha?
 Come, you look like wise men; I'm sure you
 understand what's for your good. In giving part
 of what you have, you secure all the rest. If the
 king had no money, there could be no army; and
 if there were no army, your enemies would be
 amongst you. One day's pillage would be worse
 than twenty years' taxes. What say you? is it
 not so?

Hum. By my troth, I think he's in the right
 on't again! Who'd think that little humpback
 of his should have so much brains in't, neighbour?

Æsop. Well, honest men, is there anything else
 that I can serve you in?

Hob. D'ye hear that, Humphry?—Why that
 was civil now. But courtiers seldom want good-
 breeding; let's give the devil his due.—Why, to
 tell you the truth, honest gentleman, we had a whole
 budget full of grievances to complain of. But I
 think—a—ha, neighbour?—we had e'en as good
 let 'em alone.

Hum. Why good feath I think so too, for by all
 I can see, we are like to make no great hond on't.
 Besides, between thee and me, I begin to daubt,
 whether our grievances do us such a plaguy deal of
 mischief as we fancy.

Hob. Or put case they did, Humphry; I'se
 afraid he that goes to a courtier, in hope to get
 fairly rid of 'em, may be said (in our country
 dialect) to take the wrong sow by the ear.—But
 here's neighbour Roger, he's a wit, let's leave him
 to him.

[*Exit* HOBSON AND HUMPHRY.]

Enter ROGER; he looks seriously upon Æsop, and then
 bursts out a-laughing.

Rog. Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! Did ever mon
 behold the like? ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!

Æsop. Hast thou any business with me, friend?

Rog. Yes, by my troth, have I; but if Roger
 were to be hanged up for't, look you now, he could
 not hold laughing. What I have in my mind, out
 it comes: but bar that; I'se an honest lad as well
 as another.

Æsop. My time's dearer to me than yours,
 friend. Have you anything to say to me?

Rog. Gadswokers, do people use to ask for folks
 when they have nothing to say to 'em? I'se tell
 you my business.

Æsop. Let's hear it.

Rog. I have, as you see, a little wit.

Æsop. True.

Rog. I live in a village hard by, and I'se the
 best man in it, though I say it that should not say
 it. I have good drink in my cellar, and good corn
 in my barn; I have cows and oxen, hogs and sheep,
 cocks and hens, and geese and turkeys: but the
 truth will out, and so out let it. I'se e'en tired of
 being called plain Roger. I has a leathern purse,
 and in that purse there's many a fair half-crown,
 with the king's sweet face upon it, God bless him;
 and with this money I have a mind to bind myself
 prentice to a courtier. It's a good trade, as
 I have heard say; there's money stirring: let a
 lad be but diligent, and do what he's bid, he shall
 be let into the secret, and share part of the profits.
 I have not lived to these years for nothing: those
 that will swim must go into deep water. I'se get
 our wife Joan to be the queen's chambermaid; and
 then—crack says me I! and forget all my acquaint-
 ance. But to come to the business. You who
 are the king's great favourite, I desire you'll be
 pleased to sell me some of your friendship, that I
 may get a court-place. Come, you shall choose
 me one yourself; you look like a shrewd man; by
 the mass you do!

Æsop. I choose thee a place!

Rog. Yes: I would willingly have it such a sort
 of a place as would cost little, and bring in a
 great deal; in a word, much profit, and nothing
 to do.

Æsop. But you must name what post you think
 would suit your humour.

Rog. Why I'se pratty indifferent as to that:
 secretary of state, or butler; twenty shillings more,
 twenty shillings less, is not the thing I stand upon.
 I'se no hagler, gadswokers; and he that says I
 am—'zbud he lies! There's my humour now.

Æsop. But hark you, friend, you say you are
 well as you are; why then do you desire to change?

Rog. Why what a question now is there for a
 man of your parts? I'm well, d'ye see me; and
 what of all that? I desire to be better. There's
 an answer for you.—[*Aside.*] Let Roger alone
 with him.

Æsop. Very well: this is reasoning; and I love
 a man should reason with me. But let us inquire
 a little whether your reasons are good or not. You
 say at home you want for nothing.

Rog. Nothing, 'fore George.

Æsop. You have good drink?

Rog. 'Zbud the best i'th' parish!

[*Sings.*

*And dawne it merrily goes, my lad,
 And dawne it merrily goes!*

Æsop. You eat heartily?

Rog. I have a noble stomach.

Æsop. You sleep well?

Rog. Just as I drink, till I can sleep no longer.

Æsop. You have some honest neighbours?

Rog. Honest! 'Zbud we are all so, the tawne raund, we live like breather; when one can sarve another, he does it with all his heart and guts; when we have anything that's good, we eat it together, holidays and Sundays we play at ninn-pins, tumble upon the grass with wholesome young maids, laugh till we split, daunce till we are weary, eat till we burst, drink till we are sleepy, then swap into bed, and snore till we rise to breakfast.

Æsop. And all this thou wouldst leave to go to court! I'll tell thee what once happened.

A mouse, who long had lived at court,
(Yet ne'er the better christian for't)
Walking one day to see some country sport,
He met a homebred village-mouse.
Who with an awkward speech and bow,
That favoured much of cart and plough,
Made a shift, I know not how,
To invite him to his house.
Quoth he, "My lord, I doubt you'll find
Our country fare of homely kind;
But by my troth, you're welcome to't,
Y'ave that, and bread, and cheese to boot:"
And so they sat and dined.

Rog. Very well.

Æsop. The courtier could have eat at least
As much as any household priest,
But thought himself obliged in feeding
To show the difference of town-breeding;
He pick'd and cull'd, and turn'd the meat,
He champ'd and chew'd and could not eat:
No toothless woman at fourscore,
Was ever seen to mumble more.
He made a thousand ugly faces,
Which (as sometimes in ladies' cases)
Were all design'd for airs and graces.

Rog. Ha! ha!

Æsop. At last he from the table rose,
He pick'd his teeth, and blow'd his nose,
And with an easy negligence,
As though he lately came from France.
He made a careless sliding bow:
"Fore Gad," quoth he, "I don't know how
I shall return your friendly treat;
But if you'll take a bit of meat
In town with me,
You there shall see
How we poor courtiers eat."

Rog. Tit for tat; that was friendly.

Æsop. There needed no more invitation
To e'er a country squire i'th' nation:
Exactly to the time he came,
Punctual as woman when she meets
A man between a pair of sheets,
As good a stomach, and as little shame.

Rog. Ho! ho! ho! ho! ho!

Æsop. To say the truth he found good cheer,
With wine, instead of ale and beer:
But just as they sat down to eat,
Comes bouncing in a hungry cat.

Rog. O Lord! O Lord! O Lord!

Æsop. The nimble courtier skip'd from table,
The squire leap'd too, as he was able:
It can't be said that they were beat,
It was no more than a retreat;
Which, when an army, not to fight
By day-light, runs away by night,
Was ever judged a great and glorious feat.

Rog. Ever! ever! ever!

Æsop. The cat retired, our guests return,
The danger past becomes their scorn,
They fall to eating as before;—
The butler rumbles at the door.

Rog. Good Lord!

Æsop. To boot and saddle again they sound.

Rog. Ta ra! tan tan ta ra! ra ra tan ta ra!

Æsop. They frown, as they would stand their ground,

But (like some of our friends) they found
'Twas safer much to scour.

Rog. Tantive! Tantive! Tantive! &c.

Æsop. At length the squire, who hated arms,
Was so perplex'd with these alarms,
He rose up in a kind of heat:
"Ud'zwooks!" quoth he, with all your meat,
I will maintain a dish of pease,
A radish, and a slice of cheese,
With a good dessert of ease,
Is much a better treat.

However,
Since every man should have his due,
I own, sir, I'm obliged to you
For your intentions at your board;
But pox upon your courtly crew!"

Rog. Amen! I pray the Lord. Ha! ha! ha!
ha! ha! Now the de'il cuckold me if this story be
not worth a sermon.—Give me your hond, sir.—
If it had na' been for your friendly advice, I was
going to be fool enough to be secretary of state.

Æsop. Well, go thy ways home, and be wiser
for the future.

Rog. And so I will: for that same mause, your
friend, was a witty person, gadsbudlikins! and so
our wife Joan shall know: for between you and I,
'tis she has put me upon going to court. Sir, she
has been so proud, so saucy, so rampant, ever since
I brought her home a laced pinner, and a pink-
colour pair of shoe-strings, from Tickledawne Fair,
the parson o'th' parish can't rule her; and that
you'll say's much. But so much for that. Naw
I thank you for your good counsel, honest little
gentleman; and to show you that I'se not un-
grateful—give me your hand once more.—If you'll
take the pains but to walk dawne to our towne—
a word in your ear—I'se send you so drunk whome
again, you shall remember friendly Roger as long
as you have breath in your body. [Exit.]

Æsop. Farewell! what I both envy and despise:
Thy happiness and ignorance provoke me.
How noble were the thing call'd knowledge,
Did it but lead us to a bliss like thine!
But there's a secret curse in wisdom's train,
Which on its pleasures stamps perpetual pain,
And makes the wise man loser by his gain. [Exit]

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A Room in LEARCHUS'S House.**Enter Æsop.**Æsop.* Who waits there?*Enter Servant.**If there be anybody that has business with me, let 'em in.**Serv.* Yes, sir.*[Exit.**Enter QUAINT, who stands at a distance, making a great many fawning bows.**Æsop.* Well, friend, who are you?*Quaint.* My name's Quaint, sir, the profoundest of all your honour's humble servants.*Æsop.* And what may your business be with me, sir?*Quaint.* My business, sir, with every man, is first of all to do him service.*Æsop.* And your next is, I suppose, to be paid for't twice as much as 'tis worth.*Quaint.* Your honour's most obedient, humble servant.*Æsop.* Well, sir, but upon what account am I going to be obliged to you?*Quaint.* Sir, I'm a genealogist.*Æsop.* A genealogist!*Quaint.* At your service, sir.*Æsop.* So, sir.*Quaint.* Sir, I am informed from common fame, as well as from some little private familiar intelligence, that your wisdom is entering into treaty with the *primum mobile* of good and evil, a fine lady. I have travelled, sir; I have read, sir; I have considered, sir; and I find, sir, that the nature of a fine lady is to be—a fine lady, sir; a fine lady's a fine lady, sir, all the world over; she loves a fine house, fine furniture, fine coaches, fine liveries, fine petticoats, fine smocks; and if she stops there—she's a fine lady indeed, sir. But to come to my point. It being the Lydian custom, that the fair bride should be presented on her wedding-day with something that may signify the merit and the worth of her dread lord and master, I thought the noble Æsop's pedigree might be the welcomest gift that he could offer. If his honour be of the same opinion—I'll speak a bold word; there's ne'er a herald in all Asia shall put better blood in his veins, than—sir, your humble servant, Jacob Quaint.*Æsop.* Dost thou then know my father, friend? for I protest to thee I am a stranger to him.*Quaint.* Your father, sir, ha! ha! I know every man's father, sir, and every man's grandfather, and every man's great-grandfather. Why, sir, I'm a herald by nature; my mother was a Welchwoman.*Æsop.* A Welchwoman! Prithee of what country's that?*Quaint.* That, sir, is a country in the world's backside, where every man is born a gentleman, and a genealogist. Sir, I could tell my mother's pedigree before I could speak plain; which, to show you the depth of my art, and the strength of my memory, I'll trundle you down in an instant.

—Noah had three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japhet, Shem—

Æsop. Hold, I conjure thee, in the name of all thy ancestors!*Quaint.* Sir, I could take it higher, but I begin at Noah for brevity's sake.*Æsop.* No more on't, I entreat thee.*Quaint.* Your honour's impatient, perhaps, to hear your own descent. A word to the wise is enough. Hem, hem: Solomon, the wise king of Judea—*Æsop.* Hold once more!*Quaint.* Ha! ha! your honour's modest, but—Solomon, the wise king of Judea—*Æsop.* Was my ancestor, was he not?*Quaint.* He was, my lord, which no one sure can doubt, who observes how much of prince there hangs about you.*Æsop.* What! is't in my mien?*Quaint.* You have something—wondrous noble in your air.*Æsop.* Personable too; view me well.*Quaint.* N—not tall; but majestic.*Æsop.* My shape.*Quaint.* A world of symmetry in it.*Æsop.* The lump upon my back.*Quaint.* N—not regular; but agreeable.*Æsop.* Now by my honesty thou art a villain, herald. But flattery's a thrust I never fail to parry. 'Tis a pass thou shouldst reserve for young fencers; with feints like those they're to be hit: I do not doubt but thou hast found it so; hast not?*Quaint.* I must confess, sir, I have sometimes made 'em bleed by't. But I hope your honour will please to excuse me, since, to speak the truth, I get my bread by't, and maintain my wife and children: and industry, you know, sir, is a commendable thing. Besides, sir, I have debated the business a little with my conscience; for I'm like the rest of my neighbours, I'd willingly get money, and be saved too, if the thing may be done upon any reasonable terms: and so, sir, I say, to quiet my conscience, I have found out at last that flattery is a duty.*Æsop.* A duty!*Quaint.* Ay, sir, a duty: for the duty of all men is to make one another pass their time as pleasantly as they can. Now, sir, here's a young lord, who has a great deal of land, a great deal of title, a great deal of meat, a great deal of noise, a great many servants, and a great many diseases. I find him very dull, very restless, tired with ease, cloyed with plenty, a burden to himself, and a plague to his family. I begin to flatter: he springs off of the couch; turns himself round in the glass; finds all I say true; cuts a caper a yard high; his blood trickles round in his veins; his heart's as light as his heels; and before I leave him—his purse is as empty as his head. So we both are content; for we part much happier than we met.*Æsop.* Admirable rogue! what dost thou think of murder

And of rape? Are not they duties too?

Wer't not for such vile fawning things as thou art,

Young nobles would not long be what they are :
They'd grow ashamed of luxury and ease,
And rouse up the old spirit of their fathers ;
Leave the pursuit of a poor frighten'd hare,
And make their foes to tremble in her stead ;
Furnish their heads with sciences and arts,
And fill their hearts with honour, truth, and
friendship ;

Be generous to some, and just to all ;
Drive home their creditors with bags of gold,
Instead of chasing 'em with swords and staves ;
Be faithful to their king and country both,
And stab the offerer of a bribe from either ;
Blush even at a wandering thought of vice,
And boldly own they durst be friends to virtue ;
Tremble at nothing but the frowns of Heaven,
And be no more ashamed of him that made 'em.

Quaint. [Aside.] If I stand to hear this crump
preach a little longer, I shall be fool enough per-
haps to be bubbled out of my livelihood, and so
lose a bird in the hand for two in the bush.—

[Aloud.] Sir, since I have not been able to bring
you to a good opinion of yourself, 'tis very probable
I shall scarce prevail with you to have one of me.
But if you please to do me the favour to forget me,
I shall ever acknowledge myself—sir, your most
obedient, faithful, humble servant. *[Going.]*

Æsop. Hold ; if I let thee go, and give thee
nothing, thou'lt be apt to grumble at me ; and
therefore—Who waits there ?

Enter Servant.

Quaint. [Aside.] I don't like his looks, by Gad !

Æsop. I'll present thee with a token of my love.

Quaint. A—another time, sir, will do as well.

Æsop. No ; I love to be out of debt, though 'tis
being out of the fashion.—*[To Servant.]* So, d'ye
year ? give this honest gentleman half a score good
strokes on the back with a cudgel.

Quaint. By no means in the world, sir.

Æsop. Indeed, sir, you shall take 'em.

Quaint. Sir, I don't merit half your bounty.

Æsop. O 'tis but a trifle !

Quaint. Your generosity makes me blush.

[Looking about to make his escape.]

Æsop. That's your modesty, sir.

Quaint. Sir, you are pleased to compliment.
But a—twenty pedigrees for a clear coast !

[Running off, the Servant after him.]

Æsop. Wait upon him down stairs, fellow.—
I'd do't myself, were I but nimble enough ; but he
makes haste to avoid ceremony.

Re-enter Servant.

Serv. Sir, here's a lady in great haste desires to
speak with you.

Æsop. Let her come in. *[Exit Servant.]*

Enter AMINTA, weeping.

Amin. O sir, if you don't help me, I'm undone !

Æsop. What, what's the matter, lady ?

Amin. My daughter, sir, my daughter's run
away with a filthy fellow.

Æsop. A slippery trick indeed !

Amin. For Heaven's sake, sir, send immedi-
ately to pursue 'em, and seize 'em. But 'tis in
vain, 'twill be too late, 'twill be too late ! I'll
warrant this very moment they are got together
in a room with a couch in't. All's gone, all's

gone ! though 'twere made of gold 'tis lost. Oh,
my honour ! my honour ! A forward girl she was
always ; I saw it in her eyes the very day of her
birth.

Æsop. That indeed was early ; but how do you
know she's gone with a fellow ?

Amin. I have e'en her own insolent handwriting
for't, sir ; take but the pains to read what a letter
she has left me.

Æsop. [Reads.] *I love, and am beloved, and
that's the reason I run away.*—Short, but signi-
ficant !—*I'm sure there's nobody knows better
than your ladyship what allowances are to be made
to flesh and blood ; I therefore hope this from your
justice, that what you have done three times your-
self, you'll pardon once in your daughter.*—The
dickens !

Amin. Now, sir, what do you think of the
business ?

Æsop. Why truly, lady, I think it one of the
most natural businesses I have met with a great
while. I'll tell you a story.

A crab-fish once her daughter told,
(In terms that savour'd much of scold)
She could not bear to see her go,
Sidle, sidle, to and fro ;
"The devil's in the wench!" quoth she,
"When so much money has been paid,
To polish you like me ;
It makes me almost mad to see
Y're still so awkward, an ungainly jade."
Her daughter smiled, and look'd askew
She answer'd (for to give her due)
Pertly, as most folks' daughters do :
"Madam, your ladyship," quoth she,
"Is pleased to blame in me
What, on inquiry, you may find,
Admits a passable excuse,
From a proverb much in use,
That 'cat will after kind.'"

Amin. Sir, I took you to be a man better bred,
than to liken a lady to a crab-fish.

Æsop. What I want in good-breeding, lady, I
have in truth and honesty : as what you have
wanted in virtue, you have had in a good face.

Amin. Have had, sir ! what I have had, I have
still ; and shall have a great while, I hope. I'm
no grandmother, sir.

Æsop. But in a fair way for't, madam.

Amin. Thanks to my daughter's forwardness
then, not my years. I'd have you to know, sir, I
have never a wrinkle in my face. A young pert
slut ! who'd think she should know so much at
her age ?

Æsop. Good masters make quick scholars,
lady ; she has learned her exercise from you.

Amin. But where's the remedy, sir ?

Æsop. In trying if a good example will reclaim
her, as an ill one has debauched her. Live private,
and avoid scandal.

Amin. Never speak it ; I can no more retire,
than I can go to church twice of a Sunday.

Æsop. What ! your youthful blood boils in your
veins, I'll warrant.

Amin. I have warmth enough to endure the air,
old gentleman. I need not shut myself up in a
house these twenty years.

Æsop. [Aside.] She takes a long lease of
lewdness : she'll be an admirable tenant to lust.

Amin. [*Walking hastily to and fro.*] People think when a woman is turned forty, she's old enough to turn out of the world: but I say, when a woman is turned forty, she's old enough to have more wit. The most can be said is, her face is the worse for wearing: I'll answer for all the rest of her fabric. The men would be to be pitied, by my troth would they, if we should quit the stage, and leave 'em nothing but a parcel of young pert sluts, that neither know how to speak sense, nor keep themselves clean. But don't let 'em fear, we a'n't going yet.—[*Æsop stares upon her, and as she turns from him runs off the stage.*] How now! What, left alone! An unmannerly piece of deformity! Methinks he might have had sense enough to have made love to me. But I have found men strangely dull for these last ten or twelve years. Sure they'll mend in time, or the world won't be worth living in.

For let philosophers say all they can,
The source of woman's joys is placed in man.

[*Exit.*]

SCENE II.—*The same.*

Enter LEARCHUS and EUPHRONIA, DORIS following at a distance.

Lear. [*To EUPHRONIA.*] I must tell you, mistress, I'm too mild with you; parents should never entreat their children, nor will I hereafter. Therefore, in a word, let Oronces be loved, let Æsop be hated; let one be a peacock, let t'other be a bat. I'm father, you are daughter; I command, and you shall obey.

Euph. I never yet did otherwise; nor shall I now, sir; but pray let reason guide you.

Lear. So it does. But 'tis my own, not yours, hussy.

Dor. Ah!—Well, I'll say no more; but were I in her place, by the mass I'd have a tug for't!

Lear. Demon, born to distract me! Whence art thou, in the name of fire and brimstone? Have not I satisfied thee? have not I paid thee what's thy due? and have not I turned thee out of doors, with orders never more to stride my threshold, ha? Answer, abominable spirit! what is't that makes thee haunt me?

Dor. A foolish passion, to do you good in spite of your teeth: pox on me for my zeal! I say.

Lear. And pox on thee, and thy zeal too! Isay.

Dor. Now if it were not for her sake more than for yours, I'd leave all to your own management, to be revenged of you. But rather than I'll see that sweet thing sacrificed—I'll play the devil in your house.

Lear. Patience, I summon thee to my aid!

Dor. Passion, I defy thee! to the last drop of my blood I'll maintain my ground. What have you to charge me with? speak. I love your child better than you do, and you can't bear that, ha? is't not so? Nay, it's well y'are ashamed on't; there's some sign of grace still. Look you, sir, in few words, you'll make me mad; and 'twere enough to make anybody mad (who has brains enough to be so) to see so much virtue shipwrecked at the very port. The world never saw a virgin better qualified; so witty, so discreet, so modest, so chaste; in a word, I brought her up myself, and 'twould be the death of me to see so

virtuous a maid become a lewd wife; which is the usual effect of parents' pride and covetousness.

Lear. How, strumpet! would anything be able to debauch my daughter?

Dor. Your daughter! yes your daughter, and myself into the bargain: a woman's but a woman; and I'll lay a hundred pound on nature's side. Come, sir, few words despatch business. Let who will be the wife of Æsop, she's a fool, or he's a cuckold. But you'll never have a true notion of this matter till you suppose yourself in your daughter's place. As thus:—You are a pretty, soft, warm, wishing young lady: I'm a straight, proper, handsome, vigorous, young fellow. You have a peevish, positive, covetous, old father, and he forces you to marry a little, lean, crooked, dry, sapless husband. This husband's gone abroad, you are left at home. I make you a visit; find you all alone; the servant pulls to the door; the devil comes in at the window. I begin to wheedle, you begin to melt; you like my person, and therefore believe all I say; so first I make you an atheist, and then I make you a whore. Thus the world goes, sir.

Lear. Pernicious pestilence! Has thy eternal tongue run down its larum yet?

Dor. Yes.

Lear. Then get out of my house, abomination!

Dor. I'll not stir a foot.

Lear. Who waits there? Bring me my great stick.

Dor. Bring you a stick! bring you a head-piece; that you'd call for, if you knew your own wants.

Lear. Death and furies, the devil, and so forth; I shall run distracted!

Euph. Pray, sir, don't be so angry at her. I'm sure she means well, though she may have an odd way of expressing herself.

Lear. What, you like her meaning? who doubts it, offspring of Venus! But I'll make you stay your stomach with meat of my choosing, you liquorish young baggage you! In a word, Æsop's the man; and to-morrow he shall be your lord and master. But since he can't be satisfied unless he has your heart, as well as all the rest of your trumpery, let me see you receive him in such a manner that he may think himself your choice & well as mine; 'twill make him esteem your judgment: for we usually guess at other people's understandings, by their approving our actions, and liking our faces. See here the great man comes!—[*To DORIS.*] Follow me, Insolence! and leave 'em to express their passion to each other.—[*To EUPHRONIA.*] Remember my last word to you is, obey.

Dor. [*Aside to EUPHRONIA.*] And remember my last advice to you is, rebel.

[*Exit LEARCHUS. DORIS following him.*]

Euph. Alas! I'm good-natured; the last thing that's said to me usually leaves the deepest impression.

Enter ÆSOP; they stand some time without speaking.

Æsop. They say, that lovers, for want of words, have eyes to speak with. I'm afraid you do not understand the language of mine, since yours I find will make no answer to 'em. But I must tell you, lady, There is a numerous train of youthful virgins, That are endow'd with wealth and beauty too,

Who yet have thought it worth their pains and care
To point their darts at Æsop's homely breast ;
Whilst you so much condemn what they pursue,
That a young senseless fop's prefer'd before me.

Euph. Did you but know that fop you dare to
term so,

His very looks would fright you into nothing.

Æsop. A very bauble !

Euph.

How !

Æsop.

A butterfly !

Euph. I can't bear it !

Æsop. A parroquet can prattle and look gaudy.

Euph. It may be so ; but let me paint him and
you in your proper colours, I'll do it exactly, and
you shall judge which I ought to choose.

Æsop. No, hold ! I'm naturally not over-curious ;
besides, 'tis pride makes people have their pictures
drawn.

Euph. Upon my word, sir, you may have yours
taken a hundred times before anybody will believe
'tis done upon that account.

Æsop. [*Aside.*] How severe she is upon me !—

[*Aloud.*] You are resolved then to persist, and be
fond of your feather ; sigh for a periwig, and die
for a cravat-string ?

Euph. Methinks, sir, you might treat with more
What I've thought fit to own I value ; [respect
Your affronts to him are doubly such to me.

If you continue your provoking language,

You must expect my tongue will sally too ;

And if you are as wise as some would make you,

You can't but know I should have theme enough.

Æsop. But is it possible you can love so much
as you pretend ?

Euph. Why, do you question it ?

Æsop. Because nobody loves so much as they
pretend. But hark you, young lady ! marriage is
to last a long, long time ;

And where one couple bless the sacred knot,

A train of wretches curse the institution.

You're in an age where hearts are young and tender,

A pleasing object gets admittance soon.

But since to marriage

There is annex'd this dreadful word, *For Ever*,

The following example ought to move you.

A peacock once of splendid show,

Gay, gaudy, foppish, vain—a beau,

Attack'd a fond young pheasant's heart

With such success,

He pleased her, though he made her smart ;

He pierced her with so much address,

She smiled the moment that he fix'd his dart.

A cuckoo in a neighbouring tree,

Rich, honest, ugly, old—like me,

Loved her as he loved his life :

No pamper'd priest e'er studied more

To make a virtuous nun a whore,

Than he to get her for his wife.

But all his offers still were vain,

His limbs were weak, his face was plain ;

Beauty, youth, and vigour weigh'd

With the warm desiring maid :

No bird, she cried, would serve her turn,
But what could quench as well as burn,
She'd have a young gallant ; so one she had.
But ere a month was come and gone,
The bride began to change her tone,
She found a young gallant was an inconstant one.
She wander'd to a neighbouring grove,
Where after musing long on love,
She told her confidant, she found
When for one's life one must be bound,
(Though youth indeed was a delicious bait,)
An aged husband, rich, though plain,
Would give a slavish wife less pain ;
And what was more, was sooner slain,
Which was a thing of weight.

Behold, young lady, here, the cuckoo of the fable :
I am deform'd, 'tis true, yet I have found
The means to make a figure amongst men,
That well has recompensed the wrongs of Nature.
My rival's beauty promises you much ;
Perhaps my homely form might yield you more ;
At least consider on't, 'tis worth your thought.

Euph. I must confess my fortune would be
greater ;

But what's a fortune to a heart like mine ?

'Tis true, I'm but a young philosopher,

Yet in that little space my glass has run,

I've spent some time in search of happiness :

The fond pursuit I soon observed of riches,

Inclined me to inquire into their worth ;

I found their value was not in themselves,

But in their power to grant what we could ask.

I then proceeded to my own desires,

To know what state of life would suit with them :

I found 'em moderate in their demands,

They neither ask'd for title, state, or power ;

They slighted the aspiring post of envy :

'Tis true, they trembled at the name contempt ;

A general esteem was all they wish'd ;

And that I did not doubt might be obtain'd,

If furnish'd but with virtue and good-nature ;

My fortune proved sufficient to afford me

Conveniences of life, and independence.

This, sir, was the result of my inquiry ;

And by this scheme of happiness I build,

When I prefer the man I love to you.

Æsop. How wise, how witty, and how cleanly,
young women grow, as soon as ever they are in love !

Euph. How foppish, how impertinent, and how
nauseous are old men, when they pretend to be so
too !

Æsop. How pert is youth !

Euph. How dull is age !

Æsop. Why so sharp, young lady ?

Euph. Why so blunt, old gentleman ?

Æsop. 'Tis enough ; I'll to your father, I know
how to deal with him, though I don't know how to
deal with you. Before to-morrow noon, damsel,
wife shall be written on your brow. [*Exit.*]

Euph. Then before to-morrow night, statesman,
husband shall be stamped upon your forehead. [*Exit.*]

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*A Room in LEARCHUS's House.**Enter ORONCES and DORIS.**Dor.* Patience, I beseech you.*Oron.* Patience! What, and see that lovely creature thrown into the arms of that pedantic monster: 'sdeath, I'd rather see the world reduced to atoms, mankind turned into crawfish, and myself an old woman!*Dor.* So you think an old woman a very unfortunate thing, I find; but you are mistaken, sir; she may plague other folks, but she's as entertaining to herself as any one part of the creation.*Oron.* [*Walking to and fro.*] She's the devil!—and I'm one of the damned, I think! But I'll make somebody howl for't, I will so.*Dor.* You'll e'en do as all the young fellows in the town do, spoil your own sport: ah!—had young men's shoulders but old courtiers' heads upon 'em, what a delicious time would they have on't! For shame be wise; for your mistress' sake at least use some caution.*Oron.* For her sake I'll respect, even like a deity, her father. He shall strike me, he shall tread upon me, and find me humbler even than a crawling worm, for I'll not turn again; but for Æsop, that unfinished lump, that chaos of humanity, I'll use him,—nay, expect it, for I'll do't—the first moment that I see him, I'll—*Dor.* Not challenge him, I hope.—'Twould be a pretty sight truly, to see Æsop drawn up in battalia: fy, for shame! be wise once in your life; think of gaining time, by putting off the marriage for a day or two, and not of waging war with Pigmy. Yonder's the old gentleman walking by himself in the gallery; go and wheedle him, you know his weak side; he's good-natured in the bottom. Stir up his old fatherly bowels a little, I'll warrant you'll move him at last: go, get you gone, and play your part discreetly.*Oron.* Well, I'll try; but if words won't do with one, blows shall with t'other; by heavens they shall. [*Exit.*]*Dor.* Nay, I reckon we shall have rare work on't by and by. Shield us, kind Heaven! what things are men in love! Now they are stocks and stones; then they are fire and quicksilver; first whining and crying, then swearing and damning; this moment they are in love, and next moment they are out of love. Ah! could we but live without 'em—but it's in vain to think on't. [*Exit.*]SCENE II.—*The same.**Enter ÆSOP at one side of the stage, Mrs. FORGEWILL at the other.**Mrs. Forge.* Sir, I'm your most devoted servant. What I say is no compliment, I do assure you.*Æsop.* Madam, as far as you are really mine, I believe I may venture to assure you I am yours.*Mrs. Forge.* I suppose, sir, you know that I'm a widow.*Æsop.* Madam, I don't so much as know you are a woman.*Mrs. Forge.* O surprising! why, I thought the whole town had known it. Sir, I have been a widow this twelvemonth.*Æsop.* If a body may guess at your heart by your petticoat, lady, you don't design to be so a twelvemonth more.*Mrs. Forge.* O bless me! not a twelvemonth! why, my husband has left me four squalling brats. Besides, sir, I'm undone.*Æsop.* You seem as cheerful an undone lady as I have met with.*Mrs. Forge.* Alas, sir, I have too great a spirit ever to let afflictions spoil my face. Sir, I'll tell you my condition; and that will lead me to my business with you. Sir, my husband was a scrivener.*Æsop.* The deuce he was! I thought he had been a count at least.*Mrs. Forge.* Sir, 'tis not the first time I have been taken for a countess; my mother used to say, as I lay in my cradle, I had the air of a woman of quality; and, truly, I have always lived like such. My husband, indeed, had something sneaking in him, (as most husbands have, you know, sir,) but from the moment I set foot in his house, bless me, what a change was there! His pewter was turned into silver, his goloshoes into a glass coach, and his little travelling mare into a pair of Flanders horses. Instead of a greasy cookmaid, to wait at table, I had four tall footmen in clean linen; all things became new and fashionable, and nothing looked awkward in my family. My furniture was the wonder of my neighbourhood, and my clothes the admiration of the whole town; I had a necklace that was envied by the queen, and a pair of pendants that set a duchess a-crying. In a word, I saw nothing I liked but I bought it; and my husband, good man, durst ne'er refuse paying for't. Thus I lived, and I flourished, till he sickened and died; but, ere he was cold in his grave, his creditors plundered my house. But what pity it was to see fellows with dirty shoes come into my best rooms, and touch my hangings with their filthy fingers! You won't blame me, sir, if, with all my courage, I weep at this sensible part of my misfortune.*Æsop.* A very sad story truly!*Mrs. Forge.* But now, sir, to my business. Having been informed this morning that the king has appointed a great sum of money for the marriage of young women who have lived well and are fallen to decay, I am come to acquaint you I have two strapping daughters just fit for the matter, and to desire you'll help 'em to portions out of the king's bounty; that they mayn't whine and pine, and be eaten up with the green-sickness, as half the young women in the town are, or would be, if there were not more helps for a disease than one. This, sir, is my business.*Æsop.* And this, madam, is my answer:—A crawling toad, all speckled o'er,
Vain, gaudy, painted, patch'd—a whore,

Seeing a well-fed ox hard by,
 Regards him with an envious eye,
 And (as the poets tell)
 "Ye gods, I cannot bear't!" quoth she,
 "I'll burst, or be as big as he!"
 And so began to swell.
 Her friends and kindred round her came,
 They show'd her she was much to blame,
 The thing was out of reach.
 She told 'em they were busy folk,
 And when her husband would have spoke,
 She bid him kiss her br—h.
 With that they all e'en gave her o'er,
 And she persisted as before,
 Till, with a deal of strife,
 She swell'd at last so much her spleen,
 She burst like one that we have seen,
 Who was a scrivener's wife.

This, widow, I take to be your case, and that of a great many others; for this is an age where most people get falls by clambering too high, to reach at what they should not do. The shoemaker's wife reduces her husband to a cobbler, by endeavouring to be as spruce as the tailor's; the tailor's brings hers to a butcher, by going as fine as the mercer's; the mercer's lowers hers to a foreman, by perking up to the merchant's; the merchant's wears hers to a broker, by strutting up to quality; and quality bring theirs to nothing, by striving to outdo one another. If women were humbler, men would be honest. Pride brings want, want makes rogues, rogues come to be hanged, and the devil alone's the gainer. Go your ways home, woman; and, as your husband maintained you by his pen, maintain yourself by your needle; put your great girls to service, employment will keep 'em honest; much work, and plain diet, will cure the green-sickness as well as a husband.

Mrs. Forge. Why, you pitiful pigmy, preaching, canting, pickthank! you little, sorry, crooked, dry, withered eunuch! do you know that—

Æsop. I know that I'm so deformed you han't wit enough to describe me; but I have this good quality, that a foolish woman can never make me angry.

Mrs. Forge. Can't she so! I'll try that, I will.
[She falls upon him, holds his hands, and boxes his ears.]

Æsop. Help! help! help!

Enter Servants. She runs off, they after her.

Nay, e'en let her go—let her go—don't bring her back again. I'm for making a bridge of gold for my enemy to retreat upon.—I'm quite out of breath.—A terrible woman, I protest!

Enter Sir POLIDORUS HOOGSTYEE drunk, in a hunting dress, with a Huntsman, Groom, Falconer, and other Servants; one leading a couple of hounds, another greyhounds, a third a spaniel, a fourth a gun upon his shoulder, the Falconer a hawk upon his fist, &c.

Sir Pol. Haux! Haux! Haux! Haux! Haux! Joular, there, boy! Joular! Joular! Tinker! Pedlar! Miss! Miss! Miss! Miss! Miss!—Blood and oons!—Oh, there he is; that must be he, I have seen his picture.—*[Reeling upon Æsop.]* Sir—if your name's Æsop—I'm your humble servant.

Æsop. Sir, my name is Æsop, at your service.

Sir Pol. Why, then, sir—compliments being pass'd on both sides, with your leave—we'll pro-

ceed to business.—Sir, I'm by profession—a gentleman of—three thousand pounds a—year, sir. I keep a good pack of hounds, and a good stable of horses.—*[To his Groom.]* How many horses have I, sirrah?—Sir, this is my groom.

[Presenting him to Æsop.]

Groom. Your worship has six coach-horses (cut and long-tail), two runners, half-a-dozen hunters, four breeding mares, and two blind stallions, besides pads, routs, and dog-horses.

Sir Pol. Look you there, sir, I scorn to tell a lie. He that questions my honour—he's a son of a whore. But to business.—Having heard, sir, that you were come to this town, I have taken the pains to come hither too, though I had a great deal of business upon my hands, for I have appointed three justices of the peace to hunt with 'em this morning—and be drunk with 'em in the afternoon. But the main chance must be looked to—and that's this—I desire, sir, you'll tell the king from me—I don't like these taxes—in one word as well as in twenty—I don't like these taxes.

Æsop. Pray, sir, how high may you be taxed?

Sir Pol. How high may I be taxed, sir!—Why, I may be taxed, sir,—four shillings in the pound, sir; one-half I pay in money—and t'other half I pay in perjury, sir.—Hey, Joular! Joular! Joular! haux! haux! haux! haux! haux! whoo! hoo!—Here's the best hound-bitch in Europe. Zoons is she. And I had rather kiss her than kiss my wife—rot me if I had not. But, sir, I don't like these taxes.

Æsop. Why, how would you have the war carried on?

Sir Pol. War carried on, sir!—Why, I had rather have no war carried on at all, sir, than pay taxes. I don't desire to be ruined, sir.

Æsop. Why you say you have three thousand pounds a-year.

Sir Pol. And so I have, sir.—Lettacre!—Sir, this is my steward.—How much land have I, Lettacre?

Lettacre. Your worship has three thousand pounds a-year, as good lond as any's in the county; and two thousand pounds worth of wood to cut dawne at your worship's pleasure, and put the money in your pocket.

Sir Pol. Look you there, sir, wnat have you to say to that?

Æsop. I have to say, sir, that you may pay your taxes in money, instead of perjury, and still have a better revenue than I'm afraid you deserve. What service do you do your king, sir?

Sir Pol. None at all, sir: I'm above it.

Æsop. What service may you do your country, pray?

Sir Pol. I'm justice of the peace—and captain of the militia.

Æsop. Of what use are you to your kindred?

Sir Pol. I'm the head of the family, and have all the estate.

Æsop. What good do you do your neighbours?

Sir Pol. I give 'em their bellies full of beef every time they come to see me; and make 'em so drunk, they spew it up again before they go away.

Æsop. How do you use your tenants?

Sir Pol. Why, I screw up their rents till they break and run away; and if I catch 'em again, I let 'em rot in a jail.

Æsop. How do you treat your wife?

Sir Pol. I treat her all day with ill-nature and tobacco, and all night with snoring and a dirty shirt.

Æsop. How do you breed your children?

Sir Pol. I breed my eldest son—a fool; my youngest breed themselves, and my daughters—have no breeding at all.

Æsop. 'Tis very well, sir: I shall be sure to speak to the king of you; or if you think fit to remonstrate to him, by way of petition or address, how reasonable it may be to let men of your importance go scot-free, in the time of a necessary war, I'll deliver it in council, and speak to it as I ought.

Sir Pol. Why, sir, I don't disapprove your advice; but my clerk is not here, and I can't spell well.

Æsop. You may get it writ at your leisure, and send it me. But because you are not much used to draw up addresses perhaps, I'll tell you in general what kind of one this ought to be.

May it please your Majesty—You'll excuse me if I don't know your name and title.

Sir Pol. Sir Polidorus Hogstye, of Beast-Hall, in Swine-county.

Æsop. Very well.

May it please your Majesty:

Polidorus Hogstye, of Beast-Hall, in Swine-county, most humbly represents, that he hates to pay taxes, the dreadful consequences of 'em being inevitably these, that he must retrench two dishes in ten, where not above six of 'em are designed for gluttony.

Four bottles out of twenty; where not above fifteen of 'em are for drunkenness.

Six horses out of thirty; of which not above twenty are kept for state.

And four servants out of a score; where one half do nothing but make work for 'other.

To this deplorable condition must your important subject be reduced, or forced to cut down his timber, which he would willingly preserve against an ill run at dice.

And as to the necessity of the war for the security of the kingdom, he neither knows nor cares whether it be necessary or not.

He concludes with his prayers for your majesty's life, upon condition you will protect him and his fox-hounds at Beast-Hall without e'er a penny of money.

This, sir, I suppose, is much what you would be at.

Sir Pol. Exactly, sir; I'll be sure to have one drawn up to the selfsame purpose; and next fox-hunting I'll engage half the company shall set their hands to't. Sir, I am your—most devoted servant; and if you please to let me see you at Beast-Hall, here's my huntsman, Houndsfoot, will show you a fox shall lead you through so many hedges and briars, you shall have no more clothes on your back in half an hour's time—than you had—in the womb of your mother.—Haux! haux! haux! &c.

[*Exit shouting, followed by his attendants.*]

Æsop. O tempora! O mores!

Enter Mr. FRUITFUL and Mrs. FRUITFUL.

Mr. Fruit. Heavens preserve the noble Æsop, grant him long life and happy days!

Mrs. Fruit. And send him a fruitful wife, with a hopeful issue!

Æsop. And what is it I'm to do for you, good people, to make you amends for all these friendly wishes?

Mr. Fruit. Sir, here's myself and my wife—

Mrs. Fruit. Sir, here's I and my husband—[*To Mr. FRUITFUL.*] Let me speak in my turn, Goodman Forward.—[*To ÆSOP.*] Sir, here's I and my husband, I say, think we have as good pretensions to the king's favour as ever a lord in the land.

Æsop. If you have no better than some lords in the land. I hope you won't expect much for your service.

Mr. Fruit. An't please you, you shall be judge yourself.

Mrs. Fruit. That's as he gives sentence, Mr. Littlewit; who gave you power to come to a reference? If he does not do us right, the king himself shall; what's to be done here!—[*To ÆSOP.*] Sir, I'm forced to correct my husband a little; poor man, he is not used to court-business; but to give him his due, he's ready enough at some things. Sir, I have had twenty fine children by him; fifteen of 'em are alive, and alive like to be; five tall daughters are wedded and bedded, and ten proper sons serve their king and their country.

Æsop. A goodly company, upon my word!

Mrs. Fruit. Would all men take as much pains for the peopling the kingdom, we might tuck up our aprons, and cry a fig for our enemies! but we have such a parcel of drones amongst us.—Hold up your head, husband.—He's a little out of countenance, sir, because I chid him; but the man's a very good man at the bottom. But to come to my business, sir; I hope his majesty will think it reasonable to allow me something for the service I have done him; 'tis pity but labour should be encouraged, especially when what one has done, one has done't with a good-will.

Æsop. What profession are you of, good people?

Mrs. Fruit. My husband's an innkeeper, sir; he bears the name, but I govern the house.

Æsop. And what posts are your sons in, in the service?

Mrs. Fruit. Sir, there are four monks.

Mr. Fruit. Three attorneys.

Mrs. Fruit. Two scriveners.

Mr. Fruit. And an exciseman.

Æsop. The deuse o' the service! why, I thought they had been all in the army.

Mrs. Fruit. Not one, sir.

Æsop. No, so it seems, by my troth! Ten sons that serve their country, quotha! monks, attorneys, scriveners, and excisemen, serve their country with a vengeance. You deserve to be rewarded, truly; you deserve to be hanged, you wicked people you! Get you gone out of my sight: I never was so angry in my life. [*Exit.*]

Mr. Fruit. So; who's in the right now, you or I? I told you what would come on't; you must be always a-breeding, and breeding, and the king would take care of 'em, and the queen would take care of 'em: and always some pretence or other there was. But now we have got a great kennel of whelps, and the devil will take care of 'em, for aught I see. For your sons are all rogues, and your daughters are all whores; you know they are.

Mrs. Fruit. What, you are a grudging of your pains now, you lazy, sluggish, phlegmatic drone! You have a mind to die of a lethargy, have you? but I'll raise your spirits for you, I will so. Get you gone home, go; go home, you idle sot, you. I'll raise your spirits for you!

[*Exit, pushing Mr. FRUITFUL before her.*]

Re-enter ÆSOP.

Æsop. Monks, attorneys, scriveners, and excisemen !

Enter ORONCES.

Oron. O here he is.—Sir, I have been searching for you, to say two words to you.

Æsop. And now you have found me, sir, what are they ?

Oron. They are, sir—that my name's Oronces : you comprehend me.

Æsop. I comprehend your name.

Oron. And not my business ?

Æsop. Not I, by my troth.

Oron. Then I shall endeavour to teach you, Monsieur Æsop.

Æsop. And I to learn it, Monsieur Oronces.

Oron. Know, sir—that I admire Euphronia.

Æsop. Know, sir—that you are in the right on't.

Oron. But I pretend, sir, that nobody else shall admire her.

Æsop. Then I pretend, sir, she won't admire you.

Oron. Why, so, sir ?

Æsop. Because, sir—

Oron. What, sir ?

Æsop. She's a woman, sir.

Oron. What then, sir ?

Æsop. Why then, sir, she desires to be admired by every man she meets.

Oron. Sir, you are too familiar.

Æsop. Sir, you are too haughty ; I must soften that harsh tone of yours : It don't become you, sir ; it makes a gentleman appear a porter, sir : and that you may know the use of good language, I'll tell you what once happened.

Once on a time—

Oron. I'll have none of your old wives' fables, sir, I have no time to lose ; therefore, in a word—

Æsop. In a word, be mild : for nothing else will do you service. Good manners and soft words have brought many a difficult thing to pass. Therefore hear me patiently.

A cook one day, who had been drinking,
(Only as many times, you know,
You spruce, young, witty beaux will do,
To avoid the dreadful pain of thinking.)
Had orders sent him to behead
A goose, like any chaplain fed.
He took such pains to set his knife right,
'T had done one good to have lost one's life by't.
But many men have many minds,
There's various tastes in various kinds ;
A swan (who by mistake he seized)
With wretched life was better pleased :
For as he went to give the blow,
In tuneful notes she let him know,
She neither was a goose, nor wish'd
To make her exit so.
The cook (who thought of nought but blood,
Except it were the grease,
For that you know's his fees)
To hear her sing, in great amazement stood.
" Cods-fish !" quoth he, "'twas well you spoke,
For I was just upon the stroke :
Your feathers have so much of goose,
A drunken cook could do no less
Than think you one ; that you'll confess :

But y'have a voice so soft, so sweet,
That rather than you shall be eat,
The house shall starve for want of meat :"
And so he turned her loose.

Now, sir, what say you ? Will you be the swan or the goose ?

Oron. The choice can't sure be difficult to make ; I hope you will excuse my youthful heat, Young men and lovers have a claim to pardon : But since the faults of age have no such plea, I hope you'll be more cautious of offending. The flame that warms Euphronia's heart and mine Has long, alas ! been kindled in our breasts : Even years are past since our two souls were wed, 'Twould be adultery but to wish to part 'em. And would a lump of clay alone content you, A mistress cold and senseless in your arms, Without the least remains or signs of life, Except her sighs, to mourn her absent lover ? Whilst you should press her in your eager arms, With fond desire and ecstasy of love, Would it not pierce you to the very soul, To see her tears run trickling down her cheeks, And know their fountain meant 'em all to me ? Could you bear this ?

Yet thus the gods revenge themselves on those Who stop the happy course of mutual love.

If you must be unfortunate one way, Choose that where justice may support your grief, And shun the weighty curse of injured lovers.

Æsop. Why, this is pleading like a swan indeed ! Were anything at stake but my Euphronia—

Oron. Your Euphronia, sir !—

Æsop. The goose—take heed—

Were anything, I say, at stake but her, Your plea would be too strong to be refused. But our debate's about a lady, sir, That's young, that's beautiful, that's made for love. —So am not I, you'll say ? But you're mistaken ; sir ;

I'm made to love, though not to be beloved. I have a heart like yours ; I've folly too : I've every instrument of love like others.

Oron. But, sir, you have not been so long a lover ;

Your passion's young and tender, 'Tis easy for you to become its master ; Whilst I should strive in vain : mine's old and fix'd.

Æsop. The older 'tis, the easier to be govern'd. Were mine of as long a standing, 'twere possible I might get the better on't. Old passions are like old men ; weak, and soon jostled into the kennel.

Oron. Yet age sometimes is strong, even to the verge of life.

Æsop. Ay, but there our comparison don't hold. *Oron.* You are too merry to be much in love.

Æsop. And you too sad to be so long.

Oron. My grief may end my days, so quench my flame, But nothing else can e'er extinguish it.

Æsop. Don't be discouraged, sir ; I have seen many a man outlive his passion twenty years.

Oron. But I have sworn to die Euphronia's slave.

Æsop. A decayed face always absolves a lover's oath.

Oron. Lovers whose oaths are made to faces then : But 'tis Euphronia's soul that I adore, Which never can decay.

Æsop. I would fain see a young fellow in love with a soul of threescore.

Oron. Quit but Euphronia to me, and you shall ; At least if Heaven's bounty will afford us But years enough to prove my constancy, And this is all I ask the gods and you. [Exit.

Æsop. A good pretence however to beg long life. How grossly do the inclinations of the flesh impose

upon the simplicity of the spirit ! Had this young fellow but studied anatomy, he'd have found the source of his passion lay far from his mistress's soul. Alas ! alas ! had women no more charms in their bodies than what they have in their minds, we should see more wise men in the world, much fewer lovers and poets. [Exit.

ACT V.

SCENE I.—A Room in LEARCHUS's House.

Enter EUPHRONIA and DORIS.

Euph. Heavens, what is't you make me do, Doris ? Apply myself to the man I loathe ; beg favours from him I hate ; seek a reprieve from him I abhor ; 'tis low, 'tis mean, 'tis base in me.

Dor. Why, you hate the devil as much as you do Æsop, (or within a small matter,) and should you think it a scandal to pray him to let you alone a day or two, if he were going to run away with you ; ha ?

Euph. I don't know what I think, nor what I say, nor what I do : but sure thou'rt not my friend thus to advise me.

Dor. I advise ! I advise nothing ; e'en follow your own way ; marry him, and make much of him. I have a mind to see some of his breed ; if you like it, I like it. He shan't breed out of me only ; that's all I have to take care of.

Euph. Prithee don't distract me.

Dor. Why, to-morrow's the day, fixed and firm, you know it. Much meat, little order, great many relations, few friends, horse-play, noise, and bawdy stories, all's ready for a complete wedding.

Euph. Oh ! what shall I do ?

Dor. Nay, I know this makes you tremble ; and yet your tender conscience scruples to drop one hypocritical curtsy, and say, pray, Mr. Æsop, be so kind to defer it a few days longer.

Euph. Thou knowest I cannot dissemble.

Dor. I know you can dissemble well enough when you should not do't. Do you remember how you used to plague your poor Oronces ; make him believe you loathed him, when you could have kissed the ground he went on ; affront him in all public places ; ridicule him in all company ; abuse him wherever you went : and when you had reduced him within ambs-ace of hanging or drowning then come home with tears in your eyes, and cry, Now, Doris, let's go lock ourselves up, and talk of my dear Oronces.—Is not this true ?

Euph. Yes, yes, yes. But, prithee, have some compassion of me. Come, I'll do anything thou biddest me.—What shall I say to this monster ? tell me, and I'll obey thee.

Dor. Nay, then there's some hopes of you.—Why you must tell him—'Tis natural to you to dislike folks at first sight : that since you have considered him better, you find your aversion abated : that though perhaps it may be a hard matter for you ever to think him a beau, you don't despair in time of finding out his *je-ne-sais-quoi*. And that on t'other side ; though you have hitherto thought (as most young women do) that nothing could remove your first affection, yet you

have very great hopes in the natural inconstancy of your sex. Tell him, 'tis not impossible, a change may happen, provided he gives you time : but that if he goes to force you, there's another piece of nature peculiar to woman, which may chance to spoil all, and that's contradiction. Ring that argument well in his ears : he's a philosopher, he knows it has weight in't. In short, wheedle, whine, flatter, lie, weep, spare nothing ; it's a moist age, women have tears enough ; and when you have melted him down, and gained more time, we'll employ it in closet-debates how to cheat him to the end of the chapter.

Euph. But you don't consider, Doris, that by this means I engage myself to him ; and can't afterwards with honour retreat.

Dor. Madam, I know the world.—Honour's a jest, when jilting's useful. Besides, he that would have you break your oath with Oronces, can never have the impudence to blame you for cracking your word with himself. But who knows what may happen between the cup and the lip ? Let either of the old gentlemen die, and we ride triumphant. Would I could but see the statesman sick a little, I'd recommend a doctor to him, a cousin of mine, a man of conscience, a wise physician ; tip but the wink, he understands you.

Euph. Thou wicked wench, wouldst poison him ?

Dor. I don't know what I would do. I think, I study, I invent, and somehow I will get rid of him. I do more for you, I'm sure, than you and your knight-errant do together for yourselves.

Euph. Alas ! both he and I do all we can ; thou knowest we do.

Dor. Nay, I know y'are willing enough to get together ; but y'are a couple of helpless things, Heaven knows.

Euph. Our stars, thou seest, are bent to opposition.

Dor. Stars !—I'd fain see the stars hinder me from running away with a man I liked.

Euph. Ay, but thou knowest, should I disoblige my father, he'd give my portion to my younger sister.

Dor. Ay, there the shoe pinches, there's the love of the age ! Ah !—to what an ebb of passion are lovers sunk in these days ! Give me a woman that runs away with a man when his whole estate's packed up in his snapsack : that tucks up her coats to her knees ; and through thick and through thin, from quarters to camp, trudges heartily on, with a child at her back, another in her arms, and a brace in her belly : there's flame with a witness, where this is the effects on't. But we must have love in a featherbed : forsooth, a coach and six

horses, clean linen, and a caudle ! Fy, for shame ! —O ho, here comes our man ! Now show yourself a woman, if you are one.

Enter ÆSOP.

Æsop. I'm told, fair virgin, you desire to speak with me. Lovers are apt to flatter themselves ; I take your message for a favour. I hope 'twas meant so.

Euph. Favours from women are so cheap of late, men may expect 'em truly without vanity.

Æsop. If the women are so liberal, I think the men are generous too on their side. 'Tis a well-bred age, thank Heaven ; and a deal of civility there passes between the two sexes.—What service is't that I can do you, lady ?

Euph. Sir, I have a small favour to entreat you.

Æsop. What is't ? I don't believe I shall refuse you.

Euph. What if you should promise me you won't ?

Æsop. Why then I should make a divorce between my good-breeding and my sense, which ought to be as sacred a knot as that of wedlock.

Euph. Dare you not trust then, sir, the thing you love ?

Æsop. Not when the thing I love don't love me : never !

Dor. Trust is sometimes the way to be beloved.

Æsop. Ay, but 'tis oftener the way to be cheated.

Euph. Pray promise me you'll grant my suit.

Dor. 'Tis a reasonable one, I give you my word for't.

Æsop. If it be so, I do promise to grant it.

Dor. That's still leaving yourself judge.

Æsop. Why, who's more concerned in the trial ?

Dor. But nobody ought to be judge in their own cause.

Æsop. Yet he that is so, is sure to have no wrong done him.

Dor. But if he does wrong to others, that's worse.

Æsop. Worse for them, but not for him.

Dor. True politician, by my troth !

Æsop. Men must be so when they have to do with sharpers.

Euph. If I should tell you then there were a possibility I might be brought to love you, you'd scarce believe me.

Æsop. I should hope as a lover, and suspect as a statesman.

Dor. [*Aside.*] Love and wisdom ! There's the passion of the age again.

Euph. You have lived long, sir, and observed much : did you never see Time produce strange changes ?

Æsop. Amongst women, I must confess I have.

Euph. Why, I'm a woman, sir.

Æsop. Why, truly, that gives me some hopes.

Euph. I'll increase 'em, sir ; I have already been in love two years.

Dor. And time, you know, wears all things to tatters.

Æsop. Well observed.

Euph. What if you should allow me some to try what I can do ?

Æsop. Why, truly, I would have patience a day or two, if there were as much probability of my being your new gallant, as perhaps there may be of changing your old one.

Dor. She shall give you fair play for't, sir ; opportunity and leave to prattle, and that's what carries most women in our days. Nay, she shall do more for you. You shall play with her fan ; squeeze her little finger ; buckle her shoe ; read a romance to her in the arbour ; and saunter in the woods on a moonshiny night. If this don't melt her, she's no woman, or you no man.

Æsop. I'm not a man to melt a woman that way : I know myself, and know what they require.

'Tis through a woman's eye you pierce her heart. And I've no darts can make their entrance there.

Dor. You are a great statesman, sir ; but I find you know little of our matters. A woman's heart is to be entered forty ways. Every sense she has about her keeps a door to it. With a smock-face, and a feather, you get in at her eyes. With powerful nonsense, in soft words, you creep in at her ears. An essenced peruke, and a sweet handkerchief, lets you in at her nose. With a treat, and a boxfull of sweetmeats, you slip in at her mouth : and if you would enter by her sense of feeling, 'tis as beaten a road as the rest. What think you now, sir ? There are more ways to the woods than one, you see.

Æsop. Why, you're an admirable pilot ; I don't doubt but you have steered many a ship safe to harbour. But I'm an old stubborn seaman ; I must sail by my own compass still.

Euph. And, by your obstinacy, lose your vessel.

Æsop. No : I'm just entering into port ; we'll be married to-morrow.

Euph. For Heaven's sake, defer it some days longer ! I cannot love you yet, indeed I cannot.

Æsop. Nor never will, I dare swear.

Euph. Why then will you marry me ?

Æsop. Because I love you.

Euph. If you loved me, you would never make me miserable.

Æsop. Not if I loved you for your sake ; but I love you for my own.

Dor. [*Aside.*] There's an old rogue for you.

Euph. [*Weeping.*] Is there no way left ! must I be wretched ?

Æsop. 'Tis but resolving to be pleased. You can't imagine the strength of resolution. I have seen a woman resolve to be in the wrong all the days of her life ; and by the help of her resolution she has kept her word to a tittle.

Euph. Methinks the subject we're upon should be of weight enough to make you serious.

Æsop. Right. To-morrow morning, pray be ready ; you'll find me so : I'm serious. Now I hope you are pleased. [*Turning away from her.*]

Euph. Break heart ! for if thou holdest, I'm miserable. [*Going off weeping, and leaning upon DORIS.*]

Dor. [*To ÆSOP.*] Now may the extravagance of a lewd wife, with the insolence of a virtuous one, join hand in hand to bring thy grey hairs to the grave. [*Exit EUPHRODIA and DORIS.*]

Æsop. My old friend wishes me well to the last, I see.

Enter LEARCHUS hastily, followed by ORONCES.

Oron. Pray hear me, sir.

Lea. 'Tis in vain : I'm resolved, I tell you.—Most noble Æsop, since you are pleased to accept of my poor offspring for your consort, be so charitable to my old age, to deliver me from the impertinence of youth, by making her your wife this

instant; for there's a plot against my life; they have resolved to tease me to death to-night, that they may break the match to-morrow morning. Marry her this instant, I entreat you.

Æsop. This instant, say you!

Lear. This instant; this very instant.

Æsop. 'Tis enough; get all things ready; I'll be with you in a moment. [Exit.]

Lear. Now, what say you, Mr. Flamefire? I shall have the whiphand of you presently.

Oron. Defer it but till to-morrow, sir.

Lear. That you may run away with her to-night; ha?—Sir, your most obedient, humble servant.—Hey, who waits there?

Enter Servant.

Call my daughter to me: quick.—[*Exit Servant.*]
I'll give her her despatches presently.

Re-enter EUPHRONIA.

Euph. D'ye call, sir?

Lear. Yes I do, minx. Go shift yourself, and put on your best clothes. You are to be married.

Euph. Married, sir!

Lear. Yes, married, madam; and that this instant too.

Euph. Dear sir!

Lear. Not a word: obedience and a clean smock; despatch!—[*Exit EUPHRONIA weeping.*] Sir, your most obedient humble servant. [Going.]

Oron. Yet hear what I've to say.

Lear. And what have you to say, sir?

Oron. Alas! I know not what I have to say!

Lear. Very like so.—That's a sure sign he's in love now.

Oron. Have you no bowels?

Lear. Ha! ha! bowels in a parent; here's a young fellow for you!—Hark thee, stripling; being in a very merry humour, I don't care if I discover some paternal secrets to thee. Know then, that how humoursome, how whimsical soever we may appear, there's one fixed principle that runs through almost the whole race of us; and that's to please ourselves. Why dost think I got my daughter? Why, there was something in't that pleased me. Why dost think I marry my daughter? Why to please myself still. And what is't that pleases me? Why, my interest; what dost think it should be? If *Æsop's* my son-in-law, he'll make me a lord: if thou art my son-in-law, thou'lt make me a grandfather. Now I having more mind to be a lord than a grandfather, give my daughter to him, and not to thee.

Oron. Then shall her happiness weigh nothing with you?

Lear. Not this. If it did, I'd give her to thee, and not to him.

Oron. Do you think forced marriage the way to keep women virtuous?

Lear. No; nor I don't care whether women are virtuous or not.

Oron. You know your daughter loves me.

Lear. I do so.

Oron. What if the children that *Æsop* may happen to father should chance to be begot by me?

Lear. Why, then *Æsop* would be the cuckold, not I.

Oron. Is that all your care?

Lear. Yes: I speak as a father.

Oron. What think you of your child's concern in t'other world?

Lear. Why, I think it my child's concern, not mine. I speak as a father.

Oron. Do you remember you once gave me your consent to wed your daughter?

Lear. I did.

Oron. Why did you so?

Lear. Because you were the best match that offered at that time. I did like a father.

Oron. Why then, sir, I'll do like a lover. I'll make you keep your word, or cut your throat.

Lear. Who waits there, ha?

Enter Servants.

Seize me that bully there. Carry him to prison, and keep him safe. [*They seize him.*]

Oron. Why, you won't use me thus?

Lear. Yes, but I will though.—Away with him!

—Sir, your most humble servant: I wish you a good night's rest; and as far as a merry dream goes, my daughter's at your service.

Oron. Death and furies!

[*Exeunt Servants with ORONCES.*]

Lear. [*Singing.*]

Dol, de tol dol, dol dol, de tol dol:

Lilly Burleighre's lodged in a bough.

Enter a Troop of Musicians, Dancers, &c.

Lear. How now! what have we got here?

Mus. Sir, we are a troop of trifling fellows, fiddlers and dancers, come to celebrate the wedding of your fair daughter, if your honour pleases to give us leave.

Lear. With all my heart: but who do you take me for, sir; ha?

Mus. I take your honour for our noble governor of Cyzicus.

Lear. Governor of Cyzicus! Governor of a cheese-cake! I'm father-in-law to the great *Æsop*, sirrah.—[*All bow to him.*—[*Aside.*]] I shall be a great man.—[*Aloud.*] Come, tune your fiddles: shake your legs; get all things ready. My son-in-law will be here presently.—I shall be a great man. [*Exit.*]

1 *Mus.* A great marriage, brother: what dost think will be the end on't?

2 *Mus.* Why, I believe we shall see three turns upon't. This old fellow here will turn fool; his daughter will turn strumpet; and his son-in-law will turn 'em both out of doors. But that's nothing to thee nor me, as long as we are paid for our fiddling. So tune away, gentlemen.

1 *Mus.* D'ye hear, trumpets, when the bride appears, salute her with a melancholy waft. 'Twill suit her humour; for I guess she mayn't be over-well pleased.

Re-enter LEARCHUS with several Gentlemen, and a Priest.

Lear. Gentlemen and friends, y're all welcome. I have sent to as many of you as our short time would give me leave, to desire you would be witnesses of the honour the great *Æsop* designs ourself and family.—Hey; who attends there?

Enter Servant.

Go let my daughter know I wait for her.—[*Exit Servant.*] 'Tis a vast honour that is done me, gentlemen.

Gent. It is indeed, my lord.

Lear. [*Aside.*] Look you there; if they don't call me my lord already—I shall be a great man.

Re-enter EUPHRONIA weeping, and leaning upon DORIS, both in deep mourning.

Lear. How now! what's here? all in deep mourning!—Here's a provoking baggage for you.

[The trumpets sound a melancholy air till ÆSOP appears; and then the violins and hautboys strike up a Lancashire hornpipe.]

Re-enter ÆSOP in a gay foppish dress, long peruke, &c., a gaudy equipage of Pages and Footmen, all enter in an airy brisk manner.

ÆSOP. *[In an affected tone to EUPHRONIA.]* Gad take my soul, mame, I hope I shall please you now!—Gentlemen all, I'm your humble servant. I'm going to be a very happy man, you see.—*[To EUPHRONIA.]* When the heat of the ceremony's over, if your ladyship pleases, mame, I'll wait upon you to take the air in the Park.—Hey, page; let there be a coach and six horses ready instantly.—*[Observing her dress.]* I vow to Gad, mame, I was so taken up with my good fortune, I did not observe the extreme fancy of your ladyship's wedding-clothes!—Infinitely pretty, as I hope to be saved! a world of variety, and not at all gaudy!—*[To LEARCHUS.]* My dear father-in-law, embrace me.

Lear. Your lordship does me too much honour.—*[Aside.]* I shall be a great man.

ÆSOP. Come, gentlemen, are all things ready? Where's the priest?

Priest. Here, my noble lord.

ÆSOP. Most reverend, will you please to say grace that I may fall to, for I'm very hungry, and here's very good meat.—But where's my rival all this while? The least we can do, is to invite him to the wedding.

Lear. My lord, he's in prison.

ÆSOP. In prison! how so!

Lear. He would have murdered me.

ÆSOP. A bloody fellow! But let's see him however. Send for him quickly. Ha, governor, that handsome daughter of yours, I will so mumble her!—

Lear. I shall be a great man.

Re-enter ORONCES, pinioned and guarded.

ÆSOP. O ho, here's my rival! Then we have all we want.—Advance, sir, if you please. I desire you'll do me the favour to be a witness to my marriage, lest one of these days you should take a fancy to dispute my wife with me.

Oron. Do you then send for me to insult me? 'Tis base in you.

ÆSOP. I have no time now to throw away upon points of generosity; I have hotter work upon my hands.—Come, priest, advance.

Lear. Pray hold him fast there; he has the devil and all of mischief in's eye.

ÆSOP. *[To EUPHRONIA.]* Will your ladyship please, mame, to give me your fair hand.—Heyday!

[She refuses her hand.]

Lear. I'll give it you, my noble lord, if she won't.—*[Aside.]* A stubborn, self-willed, stiff-necked strumpet!

[LEARCHUS holds out her hand to ÆSOP, who takes it; ORONCES stands on ÆSOP's left hand, and the Priest before them.]

ÆSOP. Let my rival stand next me: of all men I'd have him be satisfied.

Oron. Barbarous inhuman monster!

ÆSOP. Now, priest, do thy office.

[Flourish with the trumpets.]

Priest. Since the eternal laws of fate decree, That he thy husband, she thy wife, should be, May heaven take you to its care, May Jupiter look kindly down, Place on your heads contentment's crown; And may his godhead never frown Upon this happy pair.

[Flourish again of trumpets. As the Priest pronounces the last line, ÆSOP joins ORONCES and EUPHRONIA's hands.]

Oron. O happy change! Blessings on blessings wait on the generous ÆSOP.

ÆSOP. Happy, thrice happy may you ever be, And if you think there's something due to me, Pay it in mutual love and constancy.

Euph. *[To ÆSOP.]* You'll pardon me, most gentle If in the present transports of my soul, [rous man, Which you yourself have by your bounty caused, My willing tongue is tied from uttering The thoughts that flow from a most grateful heart.]

ÆSOP. For what I've done I merit little thanks, Since what I've done, my duty bound me to. I would your father had acquitted his: But he who's such a tyrant o'er his children To sacrifice their peace to his ambition, Is fit to govern nothing but himself.

And therefore, sir, at my return to court

[To LEARCHUS.]

I shall take care this city may be sway'd By more humanity than dwells in you.

Lear. *[Aside.]* I shall be a great man.

Euph. *[To ÆSOP.]* Had I not reason, from your constant goodness,

To judge your bounty, sir, is infinite, I should not dare to sue for farther favours: But pardon me, if imitating Heaven and you, I easily forgive my aged father, And beg that ÆSOP would forgive him too.

[Kneeling to him.]

ÆSOP. The injury he would have done to you Was great indeed:

But 'twas a blessing he design'd for me.

If therefore you can pardon him, I may.

Your injured daughter, sir, has on her knees

[To LEARCHUS.]

Entreated for her cruel barbarous father; And by her goodness has obtained her suit.

If in the remnant of your days you can find out some way to recompense her, do it, that men and gods may pardon you, as she and I have done.—But let me see, I have one quarrel still to make up. Where's my old friend Doris?

Dor. She's here, sir, at your service; and as much your friend as ever: true to her principles, and firm to her mistress. But she has a much better opinion of you now than she had half an hour ago.

ÆSOP. She has reason: for my soul appeared then as deformed as my body. But I hope now one may so far mediate for 'other, that provided I don't make love, the women won't quarrel with me; for they are worse enemies even than they are friends.—Come, gentlemen, I'll humour my dress a little longer, and share with you in the diversions these boon companions have prepared us. Let's take our places, and see how they can divert us.

[ÆSOP leads EUPHRONIA to her place. All being seated, there follows a short concert of hautboys, trumpets, &c. After which a dance between an Old Man and a Young Woman, who shuns him still as he comes near her. At last he stops, and begins this dialogue, which they sing together.]

Old Man. Why so cold, and why so coy?

What I want in youth and fire,
I have in love and in desire:

To my arms, my love, my joy!

Why so cold, and why so coy?

Woman. 'Tis sympathy perhaps with you;

You are cold, and I'm so too.

Old Man. My years alone have froze my blood;

Youthful heat in female charms,

Glowing in my aged arms,

Would melt it down once more into a flood.

Woman. Women, alas, like flints, ne'er burn
To make a virgin know {alone;

There's fire within the stone,

Some manly steel must boldly strike the blow.

Old Man. Assist me only with your charms,

You'll find I'm man, and still am bold;

You'll find I still can strike, though old:

I only want your aid to raise my arm.

Enter a Youth, who seizes on the Young Woman.

Youth. Who talks of charms, who talks of aid?

I bring an arm

That wants no charm,

To rouse the fire that's in a flinty maid.

Retire, old age!—

Woman. Winter, begone!

Behold, the youthful Spring comes gaily on.

Here, here's a torch to light a virgin's fire!

To my arms, my love, my joy!

When women have what they desire,

They're neither cold nor coy.

[*She takes him in her arms. The song and dance ended, ÆSOP takes EUPHRONIA and ORONCES by the hands, leading them forwards.*]

Æsop. By this time, my young eager couple, 'tis probable you would be glad to be alone; perhaps you'll have a mind to go to bed even without your supper; for brides and bridegrooms eat little on their wedding-night. But since if matrimony were worn as it ought to be, it would perhaps sit easier about us than usually it does, I'll give you one word of counsel, and so I shall release you. When one is out of humour, let the other be dumb. Let your diversions be such as both may have a share in 'em. Never let familiarity exclude respect. Be clean in your clothes, but nicely so in your persons. Eat at one table, lie in one room, but sleep in two beds: I'll tell the ladies why.—

[*Turning to the boxes.*]

In the sprightly month of May,
When males and females sport and play,
And kiss and toy away the day;
An eager sparrow and his mate
Chirping on a tree were sate,
Full of love—and full of prate.

They talk'd of nothing but their fires,
Of raging heats and strong desires,
Of eternal constancy;
How true and faithful they would be,
Of this and that, and endless joys,
And a thousand more such toys:
The only thing they apprehended,
Was that their lives would be so short,
They could not finish half their sport
Before their days were ended.

But as from bough to bough they rove,

They chanced at last

In furious haste,

On a twig with birdlime spread,

(Want of a more downy bed)

To act a scene of love.

Fatal it proved to both their fires.

For though at length they broke away,

And balk'd the schoolboy of his prey,

Which made him weep the livelong day,

The bridegroom in the hasty strife,

Was stuck so fast to his dear wife,

That though he used his utmost art,

He quickly found it was in vain,

To put himself to further pain,

They never more must part.

A gloomy shade o'ercastr'd his brow;

He found himself—I know not how:

He look'd—as husbands often do.

Where'er he moved he felt her still,

She kiss'd him oft against his will:

Abroad, at home, at bed and board,

With favours she o'erwhelm'd her lord.

Oft he turn'd his head away,

And seldom had a word to say.

Which absolutely spoil'd her play,

For she was better stored.

Howe'er at length her stock was spent,

(For female fires sometimes may be

Subject to mortality;)

So back to back they sit and sullenly repent.

But the mute scene was quickly ended,

The lady, for her share, pretended

The want of love lay at his door;

For her part she had still in store

Enough for him and twenty more,

Which could not be contented.

He answer'd her in homely words,

(For sparrows are but ill-bred birds,)

That he already had enjoy'd

So much, that truly he was cloy'd.

Which so provoked her spleen,

That after some good hearty prayers,

A jostle, and some spiteful tears,

They fell together by the ears,

And ne'er were fond again.

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

Æ S O P.

PART II.

SCENE I.

Enter several Players, male and female. They salute Æsop.

Æsop. Well, good people, who are all you?

All. Sir, we are players.

Æsop. Players! what players?

Play. Why, sir, we are stage-players, that's our calling: though we play upon other things too; some of us play upon the fiddle; some play upon the flute; we play upon one another; we play upon the town; and we play upon the patentees.

Osop. Patentees! prithee, what are they?

Play. Why, they are, sir—sir, they are—cod, I don't know what they are!—fish or flesh—masters or servants:—sometimes one—sometimes t'other, I think—just as we are in the mood.

Æsop. Why, I thought they had a lawful authority over you.

Play. Lawful authority, sir!—sir, we are free-born Englishmen, we care not for law nor authority neither, when we are out of humour.

Æsop. But I think they pretended at least to an authority over you; pray upon what foundation was it built?

Play. Upon a rotten one—if you'll believe us. Sir, I'll tell you what the projectors did: they embarked twenty thousand pound upon a leaky vessel.—She was built at Whitehall; I think they called her—the Patent—ay, the Patent: her keel was made of a broad seal—and the king gave them a white staff for their mainmast. She was a pretty tight frigate to look upon, indeed: they spared nothing to set her off; they gilded her, and painted her, and rigged, and gunned her; and so sent her a-privateering. But the first storm that blew, down went the mast! ashore went the ship!—Crack! says the keel:—Mercy! cried the pilot; but the wind was so high, his prayers could not be heard—so they split upon a rock—that lay hid under a petticoat.

Æsop. A very sad story, this: but what became of the ship's company?

Play. Why, sir, your humble servants here, who were the officers, and the best of the sailors—(little Ben amongst the rest) seized on a small bark that lay to our hand, and away we put to sea again. To say the truth, we were better manned than rigged, and ammunition was plaguy scarce amongst us. However, a-cruising we went, and some petty small prizes we have made; but the blessing of heaven not being among us—or how the devil 'tis, I can't tell; but we are not rich.

Æsop. Well, but what became of the rest of the crew?

Play. Why, sir, as for the scoundrels, they, poor dogs, stuck by the wreck. The captain gave them bread and cheese, and good words. He told them if they would patch her up, and venture t'other cruise, he'd prefer 'em all; so to work they went, and to sea they got her.

Æsop. I hope he kept his word with 'em.

Play. That he did; he made the boatswain's mate lieutenant; he made the cook doctor; he was forced to be purser, and pilot, and gunner himself; and the swabber took orders to be chaplain.

Æsop. But with such unskilful officers, I'm afraid, they'll hardly keep above water long.

Play. Why, truly, sir, we care not how soon they are under: but cursed folks thrive, I think. I know nothing else that makes 'em swim. I'm sure, by the rules of navigation, they ought to have overset long since; for they carry a great deal of sail, and have very little ballast.

Æsop. I'm afraid you ruin one another. I fancy if you were all in a ship together again, you'd have less work and more profit.

Play. Ah, sir—we are resolved we'll never sail under captain Patentee again.

Æsop. Prithee, why so?

Play. Sir, he has used us like dogs.

Wom. And bitches too, sir.

Æsop. I'm sorry to hear that; pray how was't he treated you?

Play. Sir, 'tis impossible to tell; he used us like the English at Amboyna.

Æsop. But I would know some particulars; tell me what 'twas he did to you.

Play. What he did, sir!—why, he did in the first place, sir—in the first place, sir, he did—ecod, I don't know what he did.—Can you tell, wife?

Wom. Yes, marry can I; and a burning shame it was too.

Play. Oh, I remember now, sir, he would not give us plums enough in our pudding.

Æsop. That indeed was very hard; but did he give you as many as he promised you?

Play. Yes, and more; but what of all that? we had not as many as we had a mind to.

1 *Wom.* Sir, my husband tells you truth.

Æsop. I believe he may. But what other wrongs did he do you?

1 *Wom.* Why, sir, he did not treat me with respect; 'twas not one day in three he would so much as bid me good-morrow.

2 *Wom.* Sir, he invited me to dinner, and never drank my health.

1 *Wom.* Then he cocked his hat at Mrs. Pert.

2 *Wom.* Yes, and told Mrs. Slippery he had as good a face as she had.

Æsop. Why, these were insufferable abuses!

2 *Play.* Then, sir, I did but come to him one day, and tell him I wanted fifty pound, and what do you think he did by me, sir—sir, he turned round upon his heel like a top—

1 *Play.* But that was nothing to the affront he put upon me, sir. I came to him, and in very civil words, as I thought, desired him to double my pay: sir, would you believe it? he had the barbarity to ask me if I intended to double my work; and because I told him no, sir—he did use me—good Lord, how he did use me!

Æsop. Prithce how?

1 *Play.* Why, he walked off, and answered me never a word.

Æsop. How had you patience?

1 *Play.* Sir, I had not patience. I sent him a challenge; and what do you think his answer was?—he sent me word I was a scoundrel son of a whore, and he would only fight me by proxy!

Æsop. Very fine!

1 *Play.* At this rate, sir, were we poor dogs used—till one frosty morning down he comes amongst us—and very roundly tells us—that for the future, no purchase no pay. They that would not work should not eat.—Sir, we at first asked him coolly and civilly, Why? His answer was, because the town wanted diversion, and he wanted money.—Our reply to this, sir, was very short; but I think to the purpose.

Æsop. What was it?

1 *Play.* It was, sir, that so we wallowed in plenty and ease—the town and he might be damned! This, sir, is the true history of separation—and we hope you'll stand our friend.

Æsop. I'll tell you what, sirs—

I once a pack of beagles knew
That much resembled—I know who;
With a good huntsman at their tail,
In full command,
With whip in hand,
They'd run apace
The cheerful chace,
And of their game were seldom known to fail.
But, being at length their chance to find
A huntsman of a gentler kind,
They soon perceived the rein was slack,
The word went quickly through the pack—
They one and all cried "Liberty!"
This happy moment we are free,
We'll range the woods,
Like nymphs and gods,
And spend our mouths in praise of mutiny."
With that old Jowler trots away,
And Bowman singles out his prey;
Thunder bellow'd through the wood,
And swore he'd burst his guts with blood.
Venus tripp'd it o'er the plain,
With boundless hopes of boundless gain.
Juno, she slipp'd down the hedge,
But left her sacred word for pledge;
That all she pick'd up by-the-by
Should to the public treasury.
And well they might rely upon her;
For Juno was a bitch of honour.

In short they all had hopes to see
A heavenly crop of mutiny,
And so to reaping fell:
But in a little time they found,
It was the devil had till'd the ground,
And brought the seed from hell.
The pack divided, nothing throve:
Discord seized the throne of love.
Want and misery all endure.
All take pains, and all grow poor.
When they had toil'd the livelong day,
And came at night to view their prey,
Oft, alas! so ill they sped,
That half went supperless to bed.
At length, they all in council sate,
Where at a very fair debate,
It was agreed at last,
That slavery with ease and plenty,
When hounds were something turn'd of twenty
Was much a better fate,
Than 'twas to work and fast.

1 *Play.* Well, sir—and what did they do then?

Æsop. Why, they all went home to their kennel again. If you think they did wisely, you'll do well to follow their example. [Exit.]

1 *Play.* Well, beagles, what think you of the little gentleman's advice?

2 *Wom.* I think he's a little ugly philosopher, and talks like a fool.

1 *Play.* Ah, why, there's it now! If he had been a tall, handsome blockhead, he had talked like a wise man.

2 *Wom.* Why, do you think, Mr. Jowler, that we'll ever join again?

1 *Play.* I do think, sweet Mrs. Juno, that if we do not join again, you must be a little freer of your carcass than you are, or you must bring down your pride to a serge petticoat.

1 *Wom.* And do you think, sir, after the affronts I have received, the patent and I can ever be friends?

1 *Play.* I do think, madam, that if my interest had not been more affronted than your face, the patent and you had never been foes.

1 *Wom.* And so, sir, then you have serious thoughts of a reconciliation?

1 *Play.* Madam, I do believe I may.

1 *Wom.* Why then, sir, give me leave to tell you, that—make it my interest, and I'll have serious thoughts on't too.

2 *Wom.* Nay, if you are thereabouts, I desire to come into the treaty.

3 *Play.* And I.

4 *Play.* And I.

2 *Play.* And I. No separate peace; none of your Turin play, I beseech you.

1 *Play.* Why then, since you are all so christianly disposed, I think we had best adjourn immediately to our council-chamber; choose some potent prince for mediator and guarantee; fix upon the place of treaty, despatch our plenipots, and whip up the peace like an oyster. For under the rose, my confederates, here is such a damned discount upon our bills, I'm afraid, if we stand it out another campaign, we must live upon slender subsistence. Ereunt.

SCENE II.

Enter a Country Gentleman, who walks to and fro, looking angrily upon Æsop.

Æsop. Have you any business with me, sir ?

Gent. I can't tell whether I have or not.

Æsop. You seem disturbed, sir.

Gent. I'm always so at the sight of a courtier.

Æsop. Pray what may it be that gives you so great an antipathy to 'em ?

Gent. My profession.

Æsop. What's that ?

Gent. Honesty.

Æsop. 'Tis an honest profession. I hope, sir, for the general good of mankind, you are in some public employment.

Gent. So I am, sir ; no thanks to the court.

Æsop. You are then, I suppose, employed by—

Gent. My country.

Æsop. Who have made you—

Gent. A senator.

Æsop. Sir, I reverence you. [Bowing.]

Gent. Sir, you may reverence as low as you please ; but I shall spare none of you. Sir, I am entrusted by my country with above ten thousand of their grievances, and in order to redress 'em, my design is to hang ten thousand courtiers.

Æsop. Why, 'tis making short work, I must confess. But are you sure, sir, that would do't ?

Gent. Sure !—ay, sure.

Æsop. How do you know ?

Gent. Why, the whole country says so, and I at the head of 'em. Now let me see who dares say the contrary.

Æsop. Not I, truly. But, sir, if you won't take it ill, I'll ask you a question or two.

Gent. Sir, I shall take ill what I please ; and if you, or e'er a courtier of you all, pretend the contrary, I say it's a breach of privilege. Now put your question, if you think fit.

Æsop. Why then, sir, with all due regard to your character, and your privilege too, I would be glad to know what you chiefly complain of ?

Gent. Why, sir, I do chiefly complain, that we have—a great many ships, and very little trade ; a great many tenants, and very little money ; a great many soldiers, and very little fighting ; a great many gazettes, and little good news ; a great many statesmen, and very little wisdom ; a great many parsons, and not an ounce of religion.

Æsop. Why truly, sir, I do confess these are grievances very well worth your redressing. I perceive you are truly sensible of our diseases, but I'm afraid you are a little out in the cure.

Gent. Sir, I perceive you take me for a country physician : but you shall find, sir, that a country doctor is able to deal with a court quack ; and to show you that I do understand something of the state of the body politic, I will tell you, sir, that I have heard a wise man say, the court is the stomach of the nation, in which, if the business be not thoroughly digested, the whole carcass will be in disorder. Now, sir, I do find by the latitude of the members, and the vapours that fly into the head, that this same stomach is full of indigestions, which must be removed. And therefore, sir, I am come post to town with my head full of *crocus metallorum*, and design to give the court a vomit.

Æsop. Sir, the physic you mention, though necessary sometimes, is of too violent a nature to

be used without a great deal of caution. I'm afraid you are a little too rash in your prescriptions. Is it not possible you may be mistaken in the cause of the distemper ?

Gent. Sir, I do not think it possible I should be mistaken in anything.

Æsop. Have you been long a senator ?

Gent. No, sir.

Æsop. Have you been much about town ?

Gent. No, sir.

Æsop. Have you conversed much with men of business ?

Gent. No, sir.

Æsop. Have you made any serious inquiry into the present disorders of the nation ?

Gent. No, sir.

Æsop. Have you ever heard what the men now employed in business have to say for themselves ?

Gent. No, sir.

Æsop. How then do you know they deserve to be punished for the present disorders in your affairs ?

Gent. I'll tell you how I know.

Æsop. I would be glad to hear.

Gent. Why, I know by this—I know it, I say, by this—that I'm sure on't.—And to give you demonstration that I'm sure on't, there's not one man in a good post in the nation—but I'd give my vote to hang him. Now I hope you are convinced.

Æsop. As for example : the first minister of state, why would you hang him ?

Gent. Because he gives bad counsel.

Æsop. How do you know ?

Gent. Why they say so.

Æsop. And who would you put in his room ?

Gent. One that would give better.

Æsop. Who's that ?

Gent. Myself.

Æsop. The secretary of state, why would you hang him ?

Gent. Because he has not good intelligence.

Æsop. How do you know ?

Gent. I have heard so.

Æsop. And who would you put in his place ?

Gent. My father.

Æsop. The treasurer, why would you hang him ?

Gent. Because he does not understand his business.

Æsop. How do you know ?

Gent. I dreamt so.

Æsop. And who would you have succeed him ?

Gent. My uncle.

Æsop. The admiral, why would you hang him ?

Gent. Because he has not destroyed the enemies.

Æsop. How do you know he could do it ?

Gent. Why, I believe so.

Æsop. And who would you have command in his stead ?

Gent. My brother.

Æsop. And the general, why would you hang him ?

Gent. Because he took ne'er a town last campaign.

Æsop. And how do you know 'twas in his power ?

Gent. Why I don't care a souse whether it was in his power or not. But I have a son at home, a brave chopping lad ; he's been captain in the militia these twelve months, and I'd be glad to see him in his place. What do ye stare for, sir ? ha ! Egad I tell you he'd scour all to the devil. He's none of your fencers, none of your sa-sa men. Numphs is downright, that's his play. You may

see his courage in his face: he has a pair of cheeks like two bladders, a nose as flat as your hand, and a forehead like a bull.

Æsop. In short, sir, I find if you and your family were provided for, things would soon grow better than they do.

Gent. And so they would, sir. Clap me at the head of the state, and Nymphs at the head of the army; he with his club-musket, and I with my club-headpiece, we'd soon put an end to your business.

Æsop. I believe you would indeed. And therefore since I happen to be acquainted with your extraordinary abilities, I am resolved to give the king an account of you, and employ my interest with him, that you and your son may have the posts you desire.

Gent. Will you, by the Lord?—Give me your fist, sir—the only honest courtier that ever I met with in my life.

Æsop. But, sir, when I have done you this mighty piece of service, I shall have a small request to beg of you, which I hope you won't refuse me.

Gent. What's that?

Æsop. Why 'tis in behalf of the two officers who are to be displaced to make room for you and your son.

Gent. The secretary and the general?

Æsop. The same. 'Tis pity they should be quite out of business; I must therefore desire you'll let me recommend one of 'em to you for your bailiff, and t'other for your huntsman.

Gent. My bailiff and my huntsman!—Sir, that's not to be granted.

Æsop. Pray, why?

Gent. Why!—because one would ruin my land, and t'other would spoil my fox-hounds.

Æsop. Why do you think so?

Gent. Why do I think so!—These courtiers will ask the strangest questions!—Why, sir, do you think that men bred up to the state and the army, can understand the business of ploughing and hunting?

Æsop. I did not know but they might.

Gent. How could you think so?

Æsop. Because I see men bred up to ploughing and hunting, understand the business of the state and the army.

Gent. I'm shot—I ha'n't one word to say for myself—I never was so caught in my life.

Æsop. I perceive, sir, by your looks what I have said has made some impression upon you; and would perhaps do more if you would give it leave.—[*Taking his hand.*] Come, sir, though I am a stranger to you, I can be your friend; my favour at court does not hinder me from being a lover of my country. 'Tis my nature as well as principles to be pleased with the prosperity of mankind. I wish all things happy, and my study is to make them so. The distempers of the government (which I own are great) have employed the stretch of my understanding, and the deepest of my thoughts, to penetrate the cause, and to find out the remedy. But, alas! all the product of my study is this:—that I find there is too near a resemblance between the diseases of the state and those of the body, for the most expert minister to become a greater master in one than the college is in t'other: and how far their skill extends you may see by this lump upon my

back. Allowances in all professions there must be, since 'tis weak man that is the weak professor. Believe me, senator, for I have seen the proof on't; the longest beard amongst us is a fool. Could you but stand behind the curtain, and there observe the secret springs of state, you'd see in all the good or evil that attends it, ten ounces of chance for one grain either of wisdom or roguery. You'd see, perhaps, a venerable statesman Sit fast asleep in a great downy chair; Whilst in that soft vacation of his thought, Blind chance (or what at least we blindly call so) Shall so dispose a thousand secret wheels, That when he wakes he needs but write his name, To publish to the world some bless'd event, For which his statue shall be raised in brass. Perhaps a moment thence you shall behold him Torturing his brain; his thoughts all stretch'd upon The rack for public service: the livelong night, When all the world's at rest, Consumed in care, and watching for their safety, When by a whirlwind in his fate, In spite of him some mischief shall befall 'em, For which a furious sentence straight shall pass, And they shall vote him to the scaffold. Even thus uncertain are rewards and punishments; And even thus little do the people know When 'tis the statesman merits one or t'other.

Gent. Now I do believe I am beginning to be a wise man; for I never till now perceived I was a fool. But do you then really believe, sir, our men in business do the best they can?

Æsop. Many of 'em do: some perhaps do not. But this you may depend upon; he that is out of business is the worst judge in the world of him that is in: first, because he seldom knows anything of the matter: and, secondly, because he always desires to get his place.

Gent. And so, sir you turn the tables upon the plaintiff, and lay the fool and knave at his door.

Æsop. If I do him wrong, I'm sorry for't. Let him examine himself, he'll find whether I do or not. [Exit.]

Gent. Examine!—I think I have had enough of that already. There's nothing left, that I know of, but to give sentence: and truly I think there's no great difficulty in that. A very pretty fellow I am indeed! Here am I come bellowing and roaring two hundred miles post to find myself an ass; when with one quarter of an hour's consideration I might have made the self-same discovery, without going over my threshold. Well! if ever they send me on their errand to reform the state again, I'll be damned. But this I'll do: I'll go home and reform my family if I can: them I'm sure I know. There's my father's a peevish old coxcomb: there's my uncle's a drunken old sot: there's my brother's a cowardly bully: son Nymphs is a lubberly whelp: I've a great ramping daughter, that stares like a heifer; and a wife's that's a slatternly sow. [Exit.]

SCENE III.

Enter a young, gay, airy Beau, who stands smiling contemptibly upon Æsop.

Æsop. Well, sir, what are you?

Beau. A fool.

Æsop. That's impossible;—for if thou wer't thou'dst think thyself a wise man.

Beau. So I do.—This is my own opinion—the t'other's my neighbours'. [*Walking airily about.*]

Æsop. [*Gazing after him.*] Have you any business with me, sir?

Beau. Sir, I have business with nobody; pleasure's my study.

Æsop. [*Aside.*] An odd fellow this!—[*Aloud.*]

Pray, sir, who are you?

Beau. I can't tell.

Æsop. Do you know who I am?

Beau. No, sir: I'm a favourite at court, and I neither know myself nor anybody else.

Æsop. Are you in any employment?

Beau. Yes.

Æsop. What is't?

Beau. I don't know the name on't.

Æsop. You know the business on't, I hope?

Beau. That I do—the business of it is—to—put in a deputy, and receive the money.

Æsop. Pray what may be your name?

Beau. Empty.

Æsop. Where do you live?

Beau. In the side-box.

Æsop. What do you do there?

Beau. I ogle the ladies.

Æsop. To what purpose?

Beau. To no purpose.

Æsop. Why then do you do it?

Beau. Because they like it, and I like it.

Æsop. Wherein consists the pleasure?

Beau. In playing the fool.

Æsop. Pray sir, what age are you?

Beau. Five-and-twenty, my body; my head's about fifteen.

Æsop. Is your father living?

Beau. Dead, thank God.

Æsop. Has he been long so?

Beau. Positively yes.

Æsop. Where were you brought up?

Beau. At school.

Æsop. What school?

Beau. The school of Venus.

Æsop. Were you ever at the university?

Beau. Yes.

Æsop. What study did you follow there?

Beau. My bedmaker.

Æsop. How long did you stay?

Beau. Till I had lost my maidenhead.

Æsop. Why did you come away?

Beau. Because I was expelled.

Æsop. Where did you go then?

Beau. To court.

Æsop. Who took care of your education there?

Beau. A whore and a dancing-master.

Æsop. What did you gain by them?

Beau. A minuet and the pox.

Æsop. Have you an estate?

Beau. I had.

Æsop. What's become on't?

Beau. Spent.

Æsop. In what?

Beau. In a twelvemonth.

Æsop. But how?

Beau. Why, in dressing, drinking, whoring, claps, dice, and scribes. What do you think of me now, old gentleman?

Æsop. Pray what do you think of yourself?

Beau. I don't think at all: I know how to bestow my time better.

Æsop. Are you married?

Beau. No—have you ever a daughter to bestow upon me?

Æsop. She would be well bestowed!

Beau. Why, I'm a strong young dog, you old put, you: she may be worse coupled.

Æsop. Have you then a mind to a wife, sir?

Beau. Yaw, min Heer.

Æsop. What would you do with her?

Beau. Why, I'd take care of her affairs, rid her of all her troubles, her maidenhead, and her portion.

Æsop. And pray what sort of wife would you be willing to throw yourself away upon?

Beau. Why, upon one that has youth, beauty, quality, virtue, wit, and money.

Æsop. And how may you be qualified yourself, to back you in your pretensions to such a one?

Beau. Why, I am qualified with—a periwig—a snuffbox—a feather—a smooth face—a fool's head—and a patch.

Æsop. But one question more: what settlements can you make?

Beau. Settlements!—why, if she be a very great heiress indeed, I believe I may settle—myself upon her for life, and my pox upon her children for ever.

Æsop. 'Tis enough; you may expect I'll serve you, if it lies in my way. But I would not have you rely too much upon your success, because people sometimes are mistaken; as for example—

An ape there was of nimble parts,
A great intruder into hearts,
As brisk, and gay, and full of air,
As you, or I, or any here;
Rich in his dress, of splendour show,
And with a head like any beau:
Eternal mirth was in his face;
Where'er he went,
He was content,
So Fortune had but kindly sent
Some ladies—and a looking-glass.
Encouragement they always gave him,
Encouragement to play the fool;
For soon they found it was a tool,
Would hardly be so much in love,
But that the mumbling of a glove,
Or tearing of a fan, would save him.

These bounties he accepts as proof
Of feats done by his wit and youth.
He gives their freedom gone for ever,
Concludes each female heart undone,
Except that very happy one,
To which he'd please to do the favour.
In short, so smooth his matters went,
He guess'd, where'er his thoughts were bent.
The lady he must carry.
So put on a fine new cravat,
He comb'd his wig, he cock'd his hat,
And gave it out he'd marry.
But here, alas! he found to's cost,
He had reckon'd long without his host:
For wheresoe'er he made the attack,
Poor pug with shame was beaten back.
The first fair she he had in chace,
Was a young cat, extremely rich,
Her mother was a noted witch;
So had the daughter proved but civil,
He had been related to the devil.

But when he came
To urge his flame,
She scratch'd him o'er the face.

With that he went among the bitches,
Such as had beauty, wit, and riches,
And swore Miss Maulken, to her cost,
Should quickly see what she had lost :
But the poor unlucky swain
Miss'd his shepherdess again ;
His fate was to miscarry.
It was his destiny to find,
That cats and dogs are of a mind,
When monkeys come to marry.

Beau. 'Tis very well ;—'tis very well, old spark ;
I say 'tis very well. Because I han't a pair of plod
shoes and a dirty shirt, you think a woman won't
venture upon me for a husband. Why now to
show you, old father, how little you philosophers
know of the ladies—I'll tell you an adventure of a
friend of mine.

A band, a bob-wig, and a feather,
Attack'd a lady's heart together ;
The band in a most learned plea,
Made up of deep philosophy,
Told her, if she would please to wed
A reverend beard, and take instead
Of vigorous youth,
Old solemn truth,

With books and morals into bed,
How happy she would be.

The Bob he talk'd of management,
What wondrous blessings heaven sent
On care, and pains, and industry ;
And truly he must be so free,
To own he thought your airy beaux,
With powder'd wigs and dancing shoes,
Were good for nothing (mend his soul !)
But prate, and talk, and play the fool.

He said 'twas wealth gave joy and mirth,
And that to be the dearest wife
Of one who labour'd all his life,
To make a mine of gold his own,
And not spend sixpence when he'd done,
Was heaven upon earth.

When these two blades had done, d'ye see,
The feather (as it might be me)
Steps out, sir, from behind the screen,
With such an air, and such a mien,
Look you, old gentleman, in short,
He quickly spoil'd the statesman's sport.

It proved such sunshine weather,
That you must know, at the first beck
The lady leap'd about his neck,
And off they went together.

There's a tale for your tale, old dad, and so—
serviteur ! [Exit.]

THE FALSE FRIEND.

A Comedy.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

DON FELIX DE CABRERA, *a Gentleman of Valencia.*
DON PEDRO OSORIO,
DON GUZMAN DE TORRELLAS, } *Lovers of LEONORA.*
DON JOHN DE ALVARADA,
LOPEZ, *Servant to DON JOHN.*

GALINDO, *Servant to DON GUZMAN.*

LEONORA, *Daughter to DON FELIX.*
ISABELLA, *her Friend, and Sister to GUZMAN.*
JACINTA, *Maid to LEONORA.*

SCENE,—VALENCIA.

PROLOGUE.

SPOKEN BY CAPT. GRIFFIN.

You dread reformers of an impious age,
You awful cat-a-nine tails to the stage,
This once be just, and in our cause engage.
To gain your favour, we your rules obey,
And treat you with a moral piece to-day ;
So moral, we're afraid 'twill damn the play.

For though ye have long been leagued (as people tell)

To reduce the power exorbitant of hell ;
No troops you send, to abate it in this field,
But leave us still exposed, to starve or yield.
Your scouts indeed sometimes come stealing in,
To observe this formidable camp of sin,
And whisper, if we'll piously declare,
What aids you then will send to help us through the war.

To this we answer, We're a feeble state,
And cannot well afford to love or hate,
So should not meddle much in your debate.
But since your cause is good, thus far we'll go,

When Portugal declares, we'll do so too.
Our cases, as we think, are much alike,
And on the same conditions we should strike ;
Send to their aid a hundred men-of-war,
To ours a hundred squadrons of the fair ;

Rig out your wives and daughters all around,
(I mean who are fit for service, tight and sound)
And for a proof our meaning is sincere,
See but the ships are good, and if you fear
A want of equipage, we'll man them here.

These are the terms, on which you may engage
The poet's fire, to batter from the stage.
Useful ally ! whose friendship lets you in
Upon the weak and naked side of sin ;
Against your old attack, the foe's prepared,
Well fortified, and always on his guard ;
The sacred shot you send are flung in vain ;
By impious hands, with insolent disdain,
They're gather'd up, and fired at you again.
Through baffled toils, and unsuccessful cares,
In slaughter, blood, and wounds, and pious snares,
Ye have made a Flanders war these fifteen hundred years.

Change then your scheme, if you'd your foe annoy,
And the infernal Bajazet destroy :
Our aid accept,
We have gentler stratagems which may succeed ;
We'll tickle 'em, where you would make 'em bleed ;
In sounds less harsh we'll teach 'em to obey ;
In softer strains the evil spirit lay,
And steal their immorality away.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—DON JOHN'S Lodgings.

Enter DON JOHN beating LOPEZ.

Lop. Hold, sir, hold ; there's enough in all conscience ; I'm reasonable, I ask no more ; I'm content.

Don John. Then there's double content, you dog, and a brace of contents more into the bargain. Now is't well ?
[Striking again and again.]

Lop. O mighty well, sir, you'll never mend it ; pray leave it as 'tis.

Don John. Look you, you jackanapes, if ever I hear an offer at your impertinent advice again—

Lop. And why, sir, will you stifle the most useful of my qualifications ?

Don John. Either, sirrah, I pass for a very great blockhead with you, or you are pleased to reckon much upon my patience.

Lop. Your patience, sir, indeed is great ; I feel at this time forty proofs on't upon my shoulders. But really, sir, I would advise you to—

Don John. Again ! I can bear thee no longer. Here, pen and ink, I'll give thee thy discharge. Did I take you for a valet, or a privy-counsellor, sir ?

Lop. 'Tis confessed, sir, you took me but for humble employment ; but my intention was agreeably to surprise you with some superior gifts of nature, to your faithful slave. I profess, my noble master, a most perfect knowledge of men and manners. Yours, gracious sir, (with all respect I speak it) are not irreprehensible. And I'm afraid in time, sir, I am indeed, they'll wriggle you into some ill-favoured affair, whence with all my understanding I shall be puzzled to bring you off.

Don John. Very well, sir.

Lop. And therefore, sir, it is, that I (poor Lopez as I am) sometimes take leave to moralise.

Don John. Go, go, moralise in the market-place ; I'm quite worn out. Once more, march.

Lop. Is the sentence definitive ?

Don John. Positive.

Lop. Then pray let us come to account, and see what wages are due.

Don John. Wages ! Refund what you have had, you rascal you, for the plague you have given me.

Lop. Nay, if I must lose my money, then let me claim another right ; losers have leave to speak. Therefore advance, my tongue, and say thy pleasure ; tell this master of mine, he should die with shame at the life he leads : so much unworthy of a man of honour. Tell him—

Don John. I'll hear no more.

Lop. You shall indeed, sir.

Don John. Here, take thy money and begone.

Lop. Counters all ; adieu you glistening spangles of the world ! farewell ye tempters of the great ; not me ! Tell him—

Don John. Stay.

Lop. Go on.—Tell him he's worse among the women than a ferret among the rabbits ; at one and all, from the princess to the tripe-woman ; handsome, ugly, old women and children, all go down.

Don John. Very well.

Lop. It is indeed, sir, and so are the stories you tell them to bring them to your matters. The handsome, she's all divinity to be sure ; the ugly, she's so agreeable, were it not for her virtue, she'd be overrun with lovers ; the light airy flipflap, she kills him with her motions ; the dull heavy-tailed maukin melts him down with her modesty ; the scragged lean pale face has a shape for destruction ; the fat overgrown sow has an air of importance ; the tall awkward trapes with her majesty wounds ; the little short trundle-tail shoots a *je-ne-sais-quoi* : in a word, they have all something for him—and he has something for 'em all.

Don John. And thus, you fool, by a general attack, I keep my heart my own ; lie with them that like me, and care not sixpence for them that don't.

Lop. Well said, well said, a very pretty amusement truly ! But pray, sir, by your leave (ceremony aside) since you are pleased to clear up into conversation, what mighty matters do you expect from boarding a woman you know is already heart and soul engaged to another ?

Don John. Why I expect her heart and soul

should disengage in a week. If you live a little longer with me, sirrah, you'll know how to instruct your next master to the purpose : and therefore that I may charitably equip you for a new service, now I'm turning you out of my own, I'll let you know, that when a woman loves a man best, she's in the most hopeful way of betraying him ; for love, like fortune, turns upon a wheel, and is very much given to rising and falling.

Lop. Like enough. But as much upon the weathercock as the ladies are, there are some the wind must blow hard to fetch them about. When such a sturdy hussy falls in your honour's way, what account may things turn to then, an't please ye ?

Don John. They turn to a bottle, you puppy.

Lop. I find they'll always turn to something ; but when you pursue a poor woman only to make her lover jealous, what pleasure can you take in that ?

Don John. That pleasure.

Lop. Look you there again !

Don John. Why, sirrah, d'you think there's no pleasure in spoiling their sport, when I can't make my own ?

Lop. Oh ! to a good-natured man, be sure there must ; but suppose, instead of fending and proving with his mistress, he should come to—a—parrying and thrusting with you ; what becomes of your joy then, my noble master ?

Don John. Why do you think I'm afraid to fight, you rascal ?

Lop. I thought we were talking of what we loved, not what we feared, sir.

Don John. Sir, I love everything that leads to what I love most.

Lop. I know, sir, you have often fought upon these occasions.

Don John. Therefore that has been no stop to my pleasures.

Lop. But you have never been killed once, sir ; and when that happens, you will for ever lose the pleasure of—

Don John. [Striking him.] Breaking your head, you rascal, which will afflict me heartily. —[Knocking at the door.] See who knocks so hard.

Lop. Somebody that thinks I can hear no better than you think I can feel.

Enter DON GUZMAN.

Don Guz. Don John de Alvarada, is he here ?

Lop. There's the man.—[Aside.] Show me such another if you can find him.

Don Guz. Don John, I desire to speak with you alone.

Don John. You may speak before this fellow, sir ; he's trusty.

Don Guz. 'Tis an affair of honour, sir.

Don John. Withdraw, Lopez.

Lop. [Aside.] Behind the door I will, and no farther. This fellow looks as if he came to save me a broken head. [Retires.]

Don Guz. I call myself Don Guzman de Torrellas, you know what blood I spring from ; I am a cadet, and by consequence not rich ; but I am esteemed by men of honour : I have been forward to expose myself in battles abroad, and I have met with applause in our feasts at home.

Lop. So much by way of introduction. [Aside.]

Don John. I understand your merit, sir, and should be glad to do as much by your business.

Don Guz. Give attention, and you'll be instructed. I love Leonora, and from my youth have done so. Long she rejected my sighs, and despised my tears, but my constancy at last has vanquished. I have found the way to her heart, and nothing is wanting to complete my joy but the consent of her father, whom I cannot yet convince that the wants in my fortune are recompensed by the merits of my person.

Lop. He's a very dull fellow indeed. [*Aside.*]

Don Guz. In the meanwhile the object of my vows is a sharer in my grief, and the only cordial we have is the pleasure of a secret conversation, through a small breach I have made in a thin partition that divides our lodgings. I trust you, Don John, with this important secret; friend or enemy, you are noble, therefore keep it, I charge your honour with it.

Lop. You could not put it in better hands.

[*Aside.*]

Don Guz. But more, my passion for this lady is not hid; all Valencia is acquainted with my wishes, and approves my choice. You alone, John de Alvarada, seeming ignorant of my vows, dare traverse my amour.

Don John. Go on.

Lop. These words import war; lie close, Lopez.

[*Aside.*]

Don Guz. You are the Argus of our street, and the spy of Leonora; whether Diana, by her borrowed light, supplies the absence of the Astrea of day, or that the shades of night cover the earth with impenetrable darkness; you still attend till Aurora's return, under the balcony of that adorable beauty.

Don John. So.

Don Guz. Wherever she moves, you still follow as her shadow, at church, at plays; be her business with heaven or earth, your importunity is such, you'll share it.

Lop. He is a forward fellow, that's the truth on't.

[*Aside.*]

Don Guz. But what's still farther, you take the liberty to copy me; my words, my actions, every motion is no sooner mine, but yours. In short, you ape me, Don; and to that point, I once designed to stab myself, and try if you would follow me in that too.

Lop. No, there the monkey would have left you.

[*Aside.*]

Don Guz. But to conclude.

Don John. 'Tis time.

Don Guz. My patience, Don, is now no more; and I pronounce, that if henceforth I find you under Leonora's window, who never wished, fond man, to see you there, I by the ways of honour shall fix you in another station. I leave you to consider on't. Farewell. [*Exit.*]

Don John. Hold, sir, we had e'en as good do this honourable deed now.

Re-enter LOPEZ.

Lop. No, pray, sir, let him go, and may be you mayn't have occasion to do it at all.

Don John. I thought at first the coxcomb came upon another subject, which would have embarrassed me much more.

Lop. Now this was a subject would have embarrassed me enough in all conscience.

Don John. I was afraid he came to forbid me seeing his sister Isabella, with whom I'm upon very good terms.

Lop. Why now that's a hard case, when you have got a man's sister, you can't leave him his mistress.

Don John. No, changeling, I hate him enough, to love every woman that belongs to him: and the fool has so provoked me by his threatening, that I believe I shall have a stroke at his mother before I think myself even with him.

Lop. A most admirable way to make up accounts truly!

Don John. A son of a whore! 'sdeath, I did not care sixpence for the slut before, but now I'll have her maidenhead in a week, for fear the rogue should marry her in ten days.

Lop. Mum; here's her father: I'll warrant this old spark comes to correct our way of living too.

Enter DON FELIX.

Don Fel. Don John

Don John. Don Felix, do I see you in my poor dwelling? Pray, to what lucky accident do I owe this honour?

Don Fel. That I may speak to you without constraint, pray send away your servant.

Lop. [*Aside.*] What the pox have I done to them, they are all so uneasy at my company!

Don John. Give us chairs, and leave the room.

Lop. [*Aside.*] If this old fellow comes to quarrel with us too, he'll at least do us less harm.

Don Fel. Won't you retire, friend?

[*Looking behind.*]

Don John. Begone, sirrah!

Lop. [*Aside.*] Pox take ye, you old prig you! But I shall be even with you!

[*Hides himself.*]

Don Fel. You know me, sir?

Don John. I do, sir.

Don Fel. That I call myself—

Don John. Don Felix.

Don Fel. That I am of the house of—

Don John. Cabrera, one of the first of Valencia.

Don Fel. That my estate is—

Don John. Great.

Don Fel. You know that I have some reputation in the world.

Don John. I know your reputation equals your birth.

Don Fel. And you are not ignorant, that heaven for the consolation of my grey hairs has given me an only daughter, who is not deformed.

Don John. Beauteous as light.

Don Fel. Well shaped, witty, and endowed with—

Don John. All the good qualities of mind and body.

Don Fel. Since you are satisfied with all this, hearken, I pray, with attention, to the business that brings me hither.

Don John. I shall.

Don Fel. We all know, Don John, some by their own experience, some by that of others, how nice a gentleman's honour is, and how easily tarnished; an éclaircissement managed with prudence, often prevents misfortunes that perhaps might be upon the point of attending us. I have thought it my duty to acquaint you, that I have seen your designs upon my daughter. You pass nights entire under her window, as if you were searching an oppor-

tunity to get into my house ; there is nobody in the town but has taken notice of your proceedings ; you give the public a subject for disadvantageous discourse ; and though in reality Leonora's virtue receives no prejudice by it, her reputation daily runs some risk. My years have taught me to judge right of things : and yet I have not been able to decide what your end can be ; you can't regard my daughter on a foot of gallantry, you know her virtue and my birth too well ; and for a wife you seem to have no thought, since you have yet made no demand to me : what then is your intention ? You have heard perhaps, I have hearkened to a gentleman of Toledo, a man of merit. I own I have, and I expect him daily here ; but, Don John, if 'tis that which hinders you from declaring in form, I'll ease you of a great deal of trouble, which the customs of the world impose upon these occasions, and in a word, I'll break with him, and give you Leonora.

Lop. [*Aside.*] Good.

Don Fel. You don't answer me ! what is't that troubles you ?

Don John. That I have been such a sot, old gentleman, to hear you with so much patience.

[*Rising.*]

Don Fel. How, Don ! I'm more astonished at your answer than I was with your silence.

Don John. Astonished ! why han't you talked to me of marriage ? He asks me to marry, and wonders what I complain of !

Don Fel. 'Tis well—'tis well, Don John, the outrage is violent ! You insult me in your own house. But know, sir—

[*Rising.*]

Don John. But know, sir, there needs no quarrel, if you please, sir ; I like your daughter very well ; but for marrying her—serviteur.

Don Fel. Don Guzman de Torrellas has not less merit than you, Don.

Don John. Agreed ; what then ?

Don Fel. And yet I have refused him my daughter.

Don John. Why then you have used him better than you have done me, which I take very unkindly.

Don Fel. I have used you, sir—

Don John. Used me, sir ! you have used me very ill, to come into my own house to seduce me.

Don Fel. What extravagance !

Don John. What persecution !

Don Fel. Am I then to have no other answer ?

Don John. Methinks you have enough in all conscience.

Don Fel. Promise me at least you'll cease to love my daughter.

Don John. I won't affront your family so far neither.

Lop. Egad my master shines to-day. [*Aside.*]

Don Fel. Know, Don, that I can bear no more.

Lop. If he could, I think there's no more to lay upon him. [*Aside.*]

Don Fel. If I find you continue to importune Leonora, I shall find a way to satisfy my offended honour, and punish your presumption.

Don John. You shall do what you please to me provided you don't marry me.

Don Fel. Know, Alvarada, there are ways to revenge such outrageous affronts as these.

Don John. I won't marry.

Don Fel. 'Tis enough.

[*Exit.*]

Lop. [*Aside.*] So ; the old fellow's gone at last, and has carried great content along with him.

Don John. Lopez.

Re-enter LOPEZ.

Lop. Sir—

Don John. What dost think ? he would have married me !

Lop. Yes, he had found his man. But you have been even with him.

Don John. What, thou hast heard us then ?

Lop. Or I were no valet. But pray what does your honour intend to do now ? Will you continue the siege of a place, where 'tis probable they will daily augment the fortifications, when there are so many open towns you may march into without the trouble of opening the trenches ?

Don John. I am going, Lopez, to double my attacks : I'll beat up her quarters six times a-night, I am now downright in love ; the difficulties pique me to the attempt, and I'll conquer or I'll die.

Lop. Why to confess the truth, sir, I find you much upon my taste in this matter ; difficulties are the rocambole of love, I never valued an easy conquest in my life. To rouse my fire, the lady must cry out (as softly as ever she can) Have a care my dear, my mother has seen us ; my brothers suspect me ; my husband may surprise us : oh, dear heart, have a care, I pray ! Then I play the devil : but when I come to a fair-one, where I may hang up my cloak upon a peg, get into my gown and slippers—

Don John. Impudent rogue ! [*Aside.*]

Lop. See her stretched upon the couch in great security, with—My dear, come kiss me, we have nothing to fear ; I droop, I yawn, I sleep.

Don John. Well, sir, whatever you do with your fair-one, I am going to be very busy with mine ; I was e'en almost weary of her, but Guzman and this old fellow have revived my dying fire ; and so have at her.

Lop. 'Tis all mighty well, sir, mighty well, sir, as can be in the world. But if you would have the goodness to consider *en passant*, or so, a little now and then, about swords and daggers, and rivals and old fellows, and pistols and great guns, and such-like baubles, only now and then at leisure, sir, not to interrupt things of more consequence.

Don John. Thou art a cowardly rascal, I have often considered that.

Lop. Ay, that's true, sir, and yet a blunderbuss is presently discharged out of a garret window.

Don John. Come, no more words ; but follow me.—How now ! what impertinence have we here now to stop me ?

Enter DON PEDRO.

Lop. 'Tis Don Pedro, or I'm a dog.

Don John. Impossible ! Don Pedro returned !

Don Ped. 'Tis I, my dearest friend ; I'm come to forget all the miseries of a long absence, in one happy embrace. [*They embrace.*]

Don John. I'm overjoyed to see you.

Don Ped. Mine's not to be expressed.—What, friend Lopez here still ! how dost do, Lopez ? What, dost not know me ?

Lop. As well as my father's seal, sir, when he sends me a bill of exchange.

Don Ped. Just as he was, I find galliard still.

Lop. I find it very unwholesome to be otherwise, sir.

Don John. You have then quitted the service in Flanders, I suppose.

Don Ped. I have so, friend; I have left the ensigns of Mars, and am listing myself in a softer militia.

Don John. Explain, pray.

Don Ped. Why, when your father's death obliged you to leave Brussels, and return hither to the plentiful fortune he left you, I stayed in Flanders, very triste for your loss, and passed three years in the trade of war. About two months since, my father writ to me from Toledo, that he was going to marry me very advantageously at Valencia. He sent me the picture of the lady, and I was so well pleased with it, that I immediately got my congé, and embarked at Dunkirk; I had a quick passage to the Groyne, from whence, by the way of Madrid, I am come hither with all the speed I could. I have, you must know, been two days in town, but I have lain *incognito*, that I might inform myself of the lady's conduct I'm to marry; and I have discovered that she's served by two cavaliers of birth and merit. But though they have both given many proofs of a most violent passion, I have found for the quiet of my honour that this virtuous lady, out of modesty or prudence, has shown a perfect indifference to them and their gallantries; her fortune is considerable, her birth is high, her manners irreproachable, and her beauty so great, that nothing but my love can equal it.

Don John. I have hearkened to you, Don Pedro, with a great deal of attention, and Heaven's my witness I have a mighty joy in seeing you; but the devil fetch me, it makes my heart bleed to hear you are going to be married.

Don Ped. Say no more of that, I desire you, we have always been friends, and I earnestly beg we ever may be so; but I am not come to ask counsel about my marriage, my party is taken, and my inquiries have so much heightened my desire, that nothing can henceforth abate it. I must therefore expect from you, dear friend, that you won't oppose it, but that you'll aid me in hastening the moment of my happiness.

Don John. Since 'tis so impossible for you to resolve for your own good, I must submit to what you'll have me. But are not we to know the name of this piece of rarity, that is to do you this good turn?

Don Ped. You'll know it presently; for I'm going to carry you to her house.

Don John. You shall tell me at least who are her two gallants.

Don Ped. One, they could not tell me his name; t'other is—But before we talk any more of these affairs, can you let me dispose of Lopez till the return of a servant I sent three days ago to—

Don John. Carry news of you to papa, I suppose.

Don Ped. You are right; the good man is thirty leagues off, and I have not seen him this six years.

Don John. Lopez, do you wait upon Don Pedro.

Lop. With all my heart.—[*Aside.*] It's at least a suspension of boxes o' th' ear, and kicks o' the backside.

Don Ped. Then, honest Lopez, with your master's leave, go to the new inn, the King of France on horseback, and see if my servant's returned; I'll be there immediately, to charge thee with a commission of more importance.

Lop. I shall perform your orders, sir, both to your satisfaction and my own reputation. [*Exit.*]

Don John. Very quaint.—Well, old acquaintance, we are going to be married then? 'Tis resolved: ha!

Don Ped. So says my star.

Don John. The foolishhest star that has said anything a great while.

Don Ped. Still the same, I see! or, more than ever, resolved to love nothing.

Don John. Love nothing! why, I'm in love at this very time.

Don Ped. With what?

Don John. A woman.

Don Ped. Impossible!

Don John. True.

Don Ped. And how came you in love with her?

Don John. Why I was ordered not to be in love with her.

Don Ped. Then there's more humour than love in't.

Don John. There shall be what you please in't: but I shan't quit the gentlewoman till I have convinced her there's something in't.

Don Ped. Mayn't I know her name?

Don John. When you have let me into your conjugal affection.

Don Ped. Pray stay here but till I have sent Lopez to my father-in-law: I'll come back and carry you with me in a moment.

Don John. I'll expect you.

Don Ped. Adieu, dear friend; may I in earnest see you quickly in love.

Don John. May I, without a jest, see you quickly a widower.—[*Exit DON PEDRO.*] He comes, he says, to marry a woman of quality that has two lovers.—If it should be Leonora?—But why she? There are many, I hope, in that condition in Valencia.—I'm a little embarrassed about it, however.—

Friendship, take heed; if woman interfere,
Be sure the hour of thy destruction's near.

[*Exit.*]

ACT II.

SCENE I.—LEONORA'S Apartment.

Enter LEONORA, ISABELLA, and JACINTA.

Leo. Dear Isabella, come in. How I am plagued with this troublesome wretch!—Jacinta, have you shut the outward gates?

Jac. I have, madam.

Leo. Shut the window too; we shall have him get in there by and by.

Isab. What's this you are in such apprehensions of, pray?

Leo. Nothing worth naming.

Isab. You dissemble: something of love in the case, I'll warrant you.

Leo. The reverse on't; 'tis aversion. My impertinent star has furnished me with a lover for my guard, who is never from my window; he persecutes me to distraction; I affront him fifty times a-day, which he receives with a bow down to the ground: in short, all I can do is doing nothing at all: he still persists in loving me, as much as I hate him.

Isab. Have a care he don't get the better on't, for all that; for when a man loves a woman well enough to persevere, 'tis odds but she at last loves him well enough to make him give it over. But I think I had as good take off my scarf; for since my brother Don Guzman knows I'm with you, he won't quarrel at my return for the length of my visit.

Leo. If he should, I should quarrel with him, which few things else would make me do. But methinks, Isabella, you are a little melancholy.

Isab. And you a little thoughtful.

Leo. Pray tell me your affliction.

Isab. Pray don't conceal yours.

Leo. Why truly, my heart is not at ease.

Isab. Mine, I fear, never will.

Leo. My father's marrying me against my inclination.

Isab. My brother is hindering me from marrying with mine.

Leo. You know I love your brother, Don Guzman.

Isab. And you shall know, I'm uneasy for Don John de Alvarada.

Leo. Don John!

Isab. The same.

Leo. Have you any reason to hope for a return?

Isab. I think so.

Leo. I'm afraid, my dear, you abuse yourself.

Isab. Why?

Leo. Because he is already in love with—

Isab. Who?

Leo. Me.

Isab. I would not have you too positive in that, madam, for I am very sure that—

Leo. Madam, I am very sure that he's the troublesome guest I just now complained of: and you may believe—

Isab. Madam, I can never believe he's troublesome to anybody.

Leo. O dear madam! But I'm sure I'm forced to keep my windows shut till I'm almost dead with heat, and that I think is troublesome.

Isab. This mistake is easily set right, Leonora. Our houses join, and when he looks at my window, you fancy 'tis at yours.

Leo. But when he attacks my door, madam, and almost breaks it down, I don't know how in the world to fancy 'tis yours.

Isab. A man may do that to disguise his real inclination.

Leo. Nay, if you please, believe he's dying for you. I wish he were; then I should be troubled no more with him.—Be sure, Jacinta, you don't open a window to-night.

Isab. Not while I'm here at least; for if he knows that, he may chance to press in.

Leo. Look you, Isabella, 'tis entirely alike to me who he's fond of; but I'm so much your friend, I can't endure to see you deceived.

Isab. And since I have the same kindness for you, Leonora, know in short, that my brother is so alarmed at his passion for me, that he has forbid him the street.

Leo. Bless my soul! and don't you plainly see by that he's jealous of him upon my account?

Isab. [*Smiling.*] He's jealous of his honour, madam, lest he should debauch his sister.

Leo. I say, he's jealous of his love, lest he should corrupt his mistress.

Isab. But why all this heat? If you love my brother, why are you concerned Don John should love me?

Leo. I'm not concerned; I have no designs upon him, I care not who he loves.

Isab. Why then are you angry?

Leo. Why do you say he does not care for me?

Isab. Well, to content you then, I know nothing certain but that I love him.

Leo. And to content you, I know nothing so certain, as that I neither love him, nor never can love him. And so I hope we are friends again.

Isab. Kiss me then, and let us never be otherwise.

Leo. Agreed.—[*They kiss.*] And now my dear, as my misfortune's nearest, I am first to be pitied. I am the most wretched woman living. My father every moment expects a gentleman from Flanders, to whom he has resolved to marry me. But neither duty, nor prudence, nor danger, nor resolution, nor all I can summon to my aid, can drive your brother from my heart; but there he's fixed to ruin me.

Jac. Madam, here's Don Guzman at the chamber-door; he begs so passionately to come in, sure you can't refuse him.

Leo. Heavens! but does he consider to what he exposes me?

Jac. Madam, he considers nothing; if he did, I'd say he were an impudent fellow to pretend to be in love with you.

Leo. Shall I venture, Isabella?

Isab. You know best.

Enter DON GUZMAN.

Jac. Marry, methinks he knows best of us all, for here he comes.

Don Guz. Forgive me, lovely Leonora; 'tis the last time perhaps that I may beg your pity. My

rival is not far; excess of modesty is now our ruin. Break through it, for this moment you have left, and own to your old father how you love. He once did so himself; our scene of sorrow may perhaps recal some small remembrance of his tender years, and melt him into mercy.

Leo. Alas! Don Guzman!

Jac. O heavens! madam—

Leo. What's the matter?

Jac. Y're undone, here's your father.

Isab. What an unlucky accident!

Leo. Has he seen Don Guzman?

Jac. Nay, the deuse knows.

Isab. Where shall he hide himself?

Jac. In the moon, if he can get thither.

Enter DON FELIX.

Don Guz. I must e'en stand it now.

Don Fel. Good news, my daughter, good news; I come to acquaint you, that—How now? what's the meaning of this? Don Guzman in my daughter's chamber!

Don Guz. I see your surprise, sir, but you need not be disturbed; 'twas some sudden business with my sister brought me here.

Don Fel. 'Tis enough, sir: I'm glad to find you here; you shall be a witness that I know how to preserve the honour of my family.

Don Guz. What mean you, sir?

Don Fel. To marry Leonora this moment.

Don Guz. How say you?

Don Fel. I say you shall have nothing left to ask of me.

Don Guz. Is't possible? O Heavens! what joy I feel.

Don Fel. Leonora, prepare your hand and heart.

Leo. They both are ready, sir; and in giving me the man I love, you charge me with a debt of gratitude can never be repaid.

Don Guz. [*Kneeling.*] Upon my knees, I thank the best of men, for blessing me with all that's blest in woman.

Isab. How well that kind, that gentle look becomes him!

Jac. Now methinks he looks like an old rogue; I don't like his looks. [*Aside.*]

Enter LOPEZ.

Lop. To all whom it may concern, greeting. Don Pedro Osorio acknowledging himself most unworthy of the honour intended him, in the person of the fair Leonora, addresses himself (by me his small ambassador) to the generosity of Don Felix, for leave to walk in and take possession.

Don Fel. I had already given order for his entrance.

Don Guz. What is't I hear!

Leo. Support me!

Isab. She faints.

Don Guz. Look, tyrant, here, and if thou canst be cruel! [*Holding her.*]

Don Fel. Bring in Don Pedro. [*Exit LOPEZ.*]

Don Guz. Barbarian!

Jac. Look up, madam, for heaven's sake! since you must marry the fellow, e'en make the most on't.

Leo. Oh!

Enter DON PEDRO and DON JOHN.

Jac. So—how d'ye do now? Come, cheer up. See, here he comes.—By my troth, and a pretty

turned fellow.—[*Aside.*] He'll set all to rights by to-morrow morning, I'll answer for him.

Don Fel. Don Pedro, you are welcome; let me embrace you.

Don Ped. In what terms, sir, shall I express what I owe you for the honour you do me? and with what prospect of return can I receive this inestimable present?—Your picture, madam, made what impression art could stamp, but nature has done more. What wounds your sex can give, or ours receive, I feel.

Don Fel. Come son, (for I'm in haste to call you so)—but what's this I see? Alvarada here! Whence, sir, this insolence; to come within my doors after you know what has passed? Who brought you here?

Don Ped. 'Twas I, sir.

Don Fel. But do you know that he—

Don Ped. Sir, he's the best of my friends.

Don Fel. But do you know, I say, that he would—

Don Ped. Hinder this marriage, 'tis true.

Don Fel. Yes, because he designed—

Don Ped. I know his design, sir; 'tis to hinder all his friends from marrying. Pray forgive him.

Don Fel. Then to prevent for ever his designs here, come hither, Leonora, and give Don Pedro your hand.

Don John. Keep down, my kindling jealousy: I've something tortures me I never felt till now.

[*Aside.*]

Don Ped. [*To LEONORA.*] Why this backwardness, madam? Where a father chooses, a daughter may with modesty approve. Pray give me your hand.

Don Guz. I cannot see it. [*Turning from them.*]

Don Fel. [*Aside to LEONORA.*] Are you distracted? Will you let him know your folly? Give him your hand, for shame!

Leo. Oh! Don Guzman, I am yours.

[*Sighing, and giving her hand carelessly.*]

Don Guz. Madam! [*Turning.*]

Don Fel. What a fatal slip! [*Aside.*]

Leo. 'Twas not to you I spoke, sir.

Don Ped. But him it was she named, and thought on too, I fear. I'm much alarmed. [*Aside.*]

Don Fel. [*To LEONORA.*] Repair what you have done, and look more cheerful on him.

Leo. Repair what you have done, and kill me.

Don Fel. Fool!

Leo. Tyrant!

Jac. A very humdrum marriage this. [*Aside.*]

Don Guz. Pray, sister, let's retire; for I can bear this sight no longer.

Isab. My dear, farewell! I pity you indeed.

Leo. I am indeed an object of your pity.

[*Exit DON GUZMAN and ISABELLA.*]

Don Fel. Come daughter, come my son, let's to the church and tie this happy knot.

Don Ped. I'll wait upon you, sir.

[*Exit DON FELIX, leading LEONORA, JACINTA following.*]

Don John. I love her, and I love her still.

Fate, do thy worst, I'll on. [*Aside.*]

Don Ped. To name another man, in giving me her hand!

[*Aside.*]

Don John. How am I racked and torn with jealousy!

[*Aside.*]

Don Ped. 'Tis doubtless so, Don Guzman has her heart.

[*Aside.*]

Don John. [*Aside.*] The bridegroom's thought-

ful. The lady's trip has furnished him with some matrimonial reflections. They'll agree with him at this time, perhaps, better than my company. I'll leave him.—[*Aloud.*] Don Pedro, adieu! we shall meet again at night.

Don Ped. Pray stay; I have need of a friend's counsel.

Don John. What, already?

Don Ped. Already.

Don John. That's to say, you have already enough of matrimony.

Don Ped. I scarce know what I have, nor am I sure of what I am.

Re-enter LOPEZ.

Lop. [*To DON PEDRO.*] An't please your honour, yonder's your man Bertrand just arrived; his horse and he so tired of one another, that they both came down upon the pavement at the stable-door.

Don Ped. [*To DON JOHN.*] He brings news from my father.

Lop. I believe he does, and hasty news too; but if you stay till he brings it hither, I believe it will come but slowly. But here's his packet; I suppose that will do as well as his company. [*Gives a letter.*]

Don Ped. [*Reads to himself.*] My dear friend, here's ill news.

Don John. What's the matter?

Don Ped. My poor old father's dying.

Don John. I'm mighty sorry for't; 'tis a weighty stroke I must confess; the burden of his estate will almost bear you down. But we must submit to Heaven's good will.

Don Ped. You talk, Alvarada, like a perfect stranger to that tenderness methinks every son should feel for a good father. For my part, I've received such repeated proofs of an uncommon affection from mine, that the loss of a mistress could scarce touch me nearer. You'll believe me, when you see me leave Leonora a virgin till I have seen the good old man.

Don John. That will be a proof indeed; Heaven's blessing must needs fall upon so dutiful a son; but I don't know how its judgments may deal with so indifferent a lover.

Don Ped. Oh, I shall have time enough to repair this seeming small neglect. But before I go, pray a word or two with you alone.—*Lopez*, wait without.—[*Exit LOPEZ.*] You see, my dearest friend, I am engaged with Leonora—perhaps I have done wrong; but 'tis gone too far to talk or think of a retreat; I shall go directly from this place to the altar, and there seal the eternal contract. That done, I'll take post to see my father, if I can, before he dies.

I leave then here a young and beauteous bride; But that which touches every string of thought, I fear, I leave her wishing I were Guzman. If it be so, no doubt he knows it well; And he that knows he's loved by Leonora, Can let no fair occasion pass to gain her: My absence is his friend, but you are mine, And so the danger's balanced. Into your hands, My dear, my faithful Alvarada—[*Embracing him*] I put my honour, I put my life; For both depend on Leonora's truth. Observe her lover, and—neglect not her. You are wise, you are active, you are brave and true. You have all the qualities that man should have For such a trust; and I by consequence

Have all the assurance man can have; You'll, as you ought, discharge it.

Don John. A very hopeful business you would have me undertake—keep a woman honest!—Udsdeath! I'd as soon undertake to keep Portocarerro honest. Look you, we are friends, intimate friends;—you must not be angry if I talk freely. Women are naturally bent to mischief, and their actions run in one continued torrent till they die. But the less a torrent's checked, the less mischief it does; let it alone, perhaps, 'twill only kiss the banks and pass; but stop it, 'tis insatiable.

Don Ped. I would not stop it; but could I gently turn its course where it might run, And vent itself with innocence, I would.

Leonora of herself is virtuous; Her birth, religion, modesty, and sense, Will guide her wishes where they ought to point.—But yet let guards be what they will, That place is safest that is ne'er attack'd.

Don John. As far as I can serve you, in hindering Guzman's approaches, you may command me.

Don Ped. That's all I ask.

Don John. Then all you ask is granted.

Don Ped. I am at ease; farewell!

Don John. Heaven bring you safe to us again! —[*Exit DON PEDRO.*] Yes, I shall observe her, doubt it not. I wish nobody may observe me; for I find I'm no more master of myself. Don Guzman's passion for her adds to mine; but when I think on what Don Pedro'll reap, I'm fire and flame! Something must be done; what, let love direct, for I have nothing else to guide me.

Re-enter LOPEZ.

Lop. [*Aside.*] Don Pedro is mounting for his journey, and leaves a young, warm, liquorish hussy, with a watery mouth, behind him.—Hum! if she falls handsomely in my master's way, let her look to her—'st—there he is. Doing what?—thinking? That's new; and if any good comes on't, that will be newer still.

Don John. [*Aside.*] How! abuse the trust a friend reposes in me? and while he thinks me waking for his peace, employ the stretch of thought to make him wretched?

Lop. Not to interrupt your pious meditations, sir, pray have you seen—Seen what, fool? Why he can't see thee. Egad, I believe the little blind bastard has whipped him through the heart in earnest.

Don John. [*Aside.*] Pedro would never have done this by me. How do I know that? Why, he swore he was my friend. Well, and I swore I was his. Why then, if I find I can break my oath, why should not I conclude he would do as much by his?

Lop. [*Aside.*] His countenance begins to clear up: I suppose things may be drawing to a conclusion.

Don John. [*Aside.*] Ay, 'tis just so; and I don't believe he would have debated the matter half so long as I have done: egad, I think I have put myself to a great expense of morality about it. I'm sure, at least, my stock's out: but I have a fund of love, I hope, may last a little longer. —[*Observing LOPEZ.*] Oh, are you there, sir?

Lop. I think so, sir.—I won't be positive in anything.

Don John. Follow me; I have some business to employ you in you'll like. [*Exit.*]

Lop. I won't be positive in that neither. I guess
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what you are going about ;—there's roguery a-foot ! This is at Leonora, who I know hates him : nothing under a rape will do't. He'll be hanged ; and then what becomes of thee, my little Lopez ? Why, the honour to a—dingle dangle by him ; which he'll have the good-nature to be mighty sorry for. But I may

chance to be beforehand with him : if we are not taken in the fact, they'll perhaps do him the honour to set a reward upon his head. Which if they do, Don, I shall go near to follow your moral example, secure my pardon, make my fortune, and hang you up for the good of your country. *[Exit]*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A Room in DON FELIX's House.*

Enter DON FELIX, DON PEDRO, LEONORA, and JACINTA.

Don Fel. How, son ! obliged to leave us immediately, say you ?

Don Ped. My ill fortune, sir, will have it so.

Leo. *[Aside.]* What can this be !

Don Fel. Pray what's the matter ? You surprise me.

Don Ped. This letter, sir, will inform you.

Don Fel. *[Reads.]* *My dear son, Bertrand has brought me the welcome news of your return, and has given me your letter ; which has in some sort revived my spirits in the extremity I am. I daily expect my exit from this world. 'Tis now six years since I have seen you ; I should be glad to do it once again before I die. If you will give me that satisfaction, you must be speedy. Heaven preserve you !—'Tis enough. The occasion I'm sorry for, but since the ties of blood and gratitude oblige you, far be it from me to hinder you. Farewell, my son ! may you have a happy journey, and if it be Heaven's will, may the sight of so good a son revive so kind a father ! I leave you to bid your wife adieu.* *[Exit.]*

Don Ped. I must leave you, my lovely bride ; With bitter pangs of separation. *[but 'tis Had I your heart to cheer me on my way, I might, with such a cordial, run my course : But that support you want the power to give me.*

Leo. Who tells you so ?

Don Ped. My eyes and ears, and all the pains I bear.

Leo. When eyes and ears are much indulged, Like favourite servants, they are apt to abuse The too much trust their master places in 'em.

Don Ped. If I am abused, Assist me with some fair interpretation Of all that present trouble and disquiet, Which is not in my power to overlook, Nor yours to hide.

Leo. You might, methinks, have spared My modesty ; and, without forcing me To name your absence, have laid my trouble there.

Don Ped. No, no, my fair deluder, that's a veil Too thin to cover what's so hard to hide ; My presence, not my absence, is the cause. Your cord reception at my first approach, Prepared me for the stroke ; and 'twas not long Before your mouth confirm'd my doom : *Don Guzman, I am yours !*

Leo. Is't, then, impossible the mouth should utter one name for another ?

Don Ped. Not at all, when it follows the dictates of the heart.

Leo. Were it even so, what wrong is from that heart received, where duty and where virtue are its rulers ?

Don Ped. Where they preside our honour may be safe, yet our minds be on the rack.

Leo. This discourse will scarce produce a remedy ; we'll end it therefore if you please, and leave the rest to time. Besides, the occasion of your journey presses you.

Don Ped. The occasion of my delay presses you, I fear, much more ; you count the tedious minutes I am with you, and are reduced to mind me of my duty to free yourself from my sight.

Leo. You urge this thing too far, and do me wrong. The sentiments I have for you are much more favourable than your jealousy suffers 'em to appear. But if my heart has seemed to lean another way, before you had a title to it, you ought not to conclude I shall suffer it to do so long.

Don Ped. I know you have virtue, gratitude, and truth ;

And therefore 'tis I love you to my ruin. Could I believe you false, contempt would soon Release me from my chains, which yet I can't But wish to wear for ever ; therefore, Indulge at least your pity to your slave, 'Tis the soft path in which we tread to love. I leave behind a tortured heart to move you.—Weigh well its pains, think on its passion too, Remember all its torments spring from you ; And if you cannot love, at least be true. *[Exit.]*

Jac. Now, by my troth, madam, I am ready to cry. He's a pretty fellow, and deserves better luck.

Leo. I own he does : and his behaviour would engage anything that were unengaged. But, alas ! I want his pity more than he does mine.

Jac. You do ! Now, I'm of another mind. The moment he sees your picture he's in love with you ; the moment he's in love with you, he embarks ; and, like lightning, in a moment more he's here : where you are pleased to receive him with a *Don Guzman, I am yours !* Ah, poor man !

Leo. I own, Jacinta, he's unfortunate, but still I say my fate is harder yet. The irresistible passion I have for Guzman renders Don Pedro, with all his merit, odious to me ; yet I must in his favour make eternal war against the strength of inclination and the man I love.

Jac. *[Aside.]* Um—If I were in her case, I could find an expedient for all this matter. But she makes such a bustle with her virtue, I dare not propose it to her.

Leo. Besides, Don Pedro possesses what he loves, but I must never think on poor Don Guzman more. *[Weeping.]*

Jac. Poor Don Guzman, indeed ! We han't said a word of the pickle he's in yet. Hark ! somebody knocks—at the old rendezvous. It's he, on my conscience.

Leo. Let's be gone ; I must think of him no more.

Jac. Yes, let's be gone ; but let's know whether 'tis he or not first.

Leo. No, Jacinta ; I must not speak with him any more.—[*Sighing.*] I'm married to another.

Jac. Married to another ! well, married to another ; why, if one were married to twenty others, one may give a civil gentleman an answer.

Leo. Alas ! what wouldst thou have mesay to him ?

Jac. Say to him ! why, one may find twenty things to say to a man. Say, that 'tis true you are married to another, and that a—'twould be a sin to think of anybody but your husband, and that a—you are of a timorous nature, and afraid of being damned ; and that a—you would not have him die neither ; that a—folks are mortal, and things sometimes come strangely about, and a widow's a widow, and—

Leo. Peace, Levity !—[*Sighing.*] But see who 'tis knocks.

Jac. Who's there ?

Isab. [*Behind the scenes.*] 'Tis I, Isabella.

Leo. Isabella ! What do you want, my dear ?

Isab. Your succour, for Heaven's sake, Leonora. My brother will destroy himself.

Leo. Alas ! it is not in my power to save him.

Isab. Permit him but to speak to you, that possibly may do.

Leo. Why have not I the force to refuse him ?

Don Guz. [*Behind the scenes.*] Is it you, I hear, my poor lost mistress ? Am I so happy once more to meet you where I so often have been blest ?

Jac. Courage, madam, say a little something to him.

Don Guz. Not one kind word to a distracted lover ?

No pity for a wretch you have made so miserable ?

Leo. The only way to end that misery is to forget we ever thought of happiness.

Don Guz. And is that in your power ? Ah, You never loved like me ! [*Leonora,*

Leo. How I have loved, to Heaven I appeal ! But Heaven does now permit that love no more.

Don Guz. Why does it then permit us life and Are we deceived in its omnipotence ? [thought ? Is it reduced

To find its pleasures in its creatures' pain ?

Leo. In what, or where, the joys of heaven consist,

Lies deeper than a woman's line can fathom ;

But this we know,

A wife must in her husband seek for hers,

And therefore I must think of you no more.

Farewell. [*Exit.*

Don Guz. Yet hear me, cruel Leonora.

Jac. It must be another time then, for she's whipped off now. All the comfort I can give you is, that I see she durst not trust herself any longer in your company. But hush, I hear a noise, get you gone, we shall be catched.

Leo. [*Within.*] Jacinta !

Jac. I come, I come, madam. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—A Room in the same.

Enter LOPEZ.

Lop. If I mistake not, there are a brace of lovers intend to take some pains about madam, in her husband's absence. Poor Don Pedro ! Well,

methinks a man's in a very merry mood that marries a handsome wife. When I dispose of my person, it shall be to an ugly one : they take it so kindly, and are so full of acknowledgment ; watch you, wait upon you, nurse you, humour you, are so fond, and so chaste. Or if the hussy has presumption enough to think of being otherwise, away with her into the mountains fifty leagues off ; nobody opposes. If she's mutinous, give her discipline ; everybody approves on't. Hang her ! says one, he's kinder than she deserves ; Damn her ! says another, why does not he starve her ? But if she's handsome, Ah the brute ! cries one—Ah the Turk ! cries 'tother : Why don't she cuckold him ? says this fellow ; Why does not she poison him ? says that ; and away comes a packet of epistles to advise her to't. Ah, poor Don Pedro ! But enough. 'Tis now night, all's hush and still : everybody's a-bed, and what am I to do ? Why, as other trusty domestics, sit up to let the thief in. But I suppose he won't be here yet ; with the help of a small nap beforehand, I shall be in a better condition to perform the duty of a sentinel when I go to my post. This corner will just fit me. Come, Lopez, lie thee down, short prayers, and to sleep. [*He lies down.*

Enter JACINTA, with a candle in her hand.

Jac. So, I have put my poor lady to bed with nothing but sobs, tears, sighs, wishes, and a poor pillow to mumble, instead of a bridegroom, poor heart ! I pity her ; but everybody has their afflictions, and by the beads of my grandmother, I have mine. Tell me, kind gentlemen, if I have not something to excite you ? Methinks I have a roguish eye, I'm sure I have a mettled heart. I'm soft, and warm, and sound, may it please ye. Whence comes it then, this rascal Lopez, who now has been two hours in the family, has not yet thought it worth his while to make one motion towards me ? Not that the blockhead's charms have moved me, but I'm angry mine han't been able to move him. I doubt I must begin with the lubber ; my reputation's at stake upon't, and I must rouse the drone somehow.

Lop. [*Rubbing his eyes, and coming on.*] What a damned condition is that of a valet ! No sooner do I, in comfortable slumber, close my eyes, but methinks my master's upon me, with fifty slaps o' th' back, for making him wait in the street. I have his orders to let him in here to-night, and so I had e'en—who's that ?—Jacinta !—Yes. A caterwauling !—like enough.

Jac. The fellow's there ; I had best not lose the occasion. [*Aside.*

Lop. The slut's handsome ; I begin to kindle. But if my master should be at the door—why there let him be till the matter's over. [*Aside.*

Jac. Shall I advance ? [*Aside.*

Lop. Shall I venture ? [*Aside.*

Jac. How severe a look he has ! [*Aside.*

Lop. She seems very reserved. [*Aside.*

Jac. If he should put the negative upon me. [*Aside.*

Lop. She seems a woman of great discretion ; I tremble. [*Aside.*

Jac. Hang it, I must venture. [*Aside.*

Lop. Faint heart never won fair lady. [*Aside.*

Jac. Lopez ?

Lop. Jacinta !

Jac. O dear heart! is't you?

Lop. Charming Jacinta! fear me not.

Jac. [*Aside.*] O ho! he begins to talk soft—then let us take upon us again.

Lop. Cruel Jacinta, whose mouth (small as it is) has made but one morsel of my heart.

Jac. [*Aside.*] It's well he prevents me. I was going to leap about the rascal's neck.

Lop. Barbare Jacinta, cast your eyes On your poor Lopez, ere he dies.

Jac. [*Aside.*] Poetry too! Nay then I have done his business.

Lop. Feel how I burn with hot desire,

Ah! pity me, and quench my fire;

Deaf, my fair tyrant, deaf to my woes,

Nay then, barbarian, in it goes. [*Drawing a knife.*]

Jac. Why how now, Jack-sauce? why how now, Presumption? What encouragement have I given you, Jack-a-lent, to attack me with your tenders? I could tear your eyes out, sirrah, for thinking I am such a one. What indecency have you seen in my behaviour, impudence, that you should think me for your beastly turn, you goat you?

Lop. Patience, my much offended goddess, 'tis honourably I would share your bed.

Jac. Peace, I say—Mr. Liquorish. I, for whom the most successful cavaliers employ their sighs in vain, shall I look down upon a crawling worm? Pha!—see that crop-ear there, that vermin, that wants to eat at a table would set his master's mouth at a watering!

Lop. May I presume to make an humble meal upon what savoury remnants he may leave?

Jac. No.

Lop. 'Tis hard! 'tis wondrous hard!

Jac. Leave me.

Lop. 'Tis pitiful, 'tis wondrous pitiful!

Jac. Begone! I say.—

Thus ladies 'tis, perhaps, sometimes with you;
With scorn you fly the thing which you pursue.

[*Aside.—Exit.*]

Lop. 'Tis very well, Mrs. Flipflap, 'tis very well; but do you hear—Tawdry, you are not so alluring as you think you are—Comb-brush, nor I so much in love!—your maidenhead may chance to grow mouldy with your airs;—the pox be your bedfellow! there's that for you.—Come, let's think no more on't, sailors must meet with storms; my master's going to sea too. He may chance to fare no better with the lady than I have done with her Abigail: there may be foul weather there too. I reckon at present he may be lying by under a mizen at the street-door, I think it rains too for his comfort. What if I should leave him there an hour or two in fresco, and try to work off the amour that way? No; people will be physicked their own way. But perhaps I might save his life by't—yes, and have my bones broke for being so officious; therefore, if you are at the door, Don John, walk in and take your fortune.

[*Opens the door.*]

Enter Don John.

Don John. Hist! hist!

Lop. Hist! hist!

Don John. Lopez!

Lop. [*Aside.*] The devil!—[*Aloud.*] Tread softly.

Don John. Are they all asleep?

Lop. Dead.

Don John. Enough; shut the door.

Lop. 'Tis done.

Don John. Now begone.

Lop. What! shut the door first, and then begone? Now, methinks, I might as well have gone first, and then shut the door.

Don John. I bid you begone, you dog you! do you find the way.

Lop. [*Aside.*] Stark mad, and always so when a woman's in chase.—[*Aloud.*] But, sir, will you keep your chief minister out of the secrets of your state? Pray let me know what this night's work is to be.

Don John. No questions, but march.

Lop. Very well.—[*Goes to the door, and returns.*] But, sir, shall I stay for you in the street?

Don John. No, nor stir out of the house.

Lop. So. Well, sir, I'll do just as you have ordered me; I'll be gone, and I'll stay; and I'll march, and I won't stir, and—just as you say, sir.

Don John. I see you are afraid, you rascal you.

Lop. Passably.

Don John. Well, be it so; but you shan't leave the house, sir; therefore begone to your hogstye, and wait further orders.

Lop. [*Aside.*] But first I'll know how you intend to dispose of yourself.

[*Conceals himself behind the door.*]

Don John. All's hush and still; and I am at the point of being a happy—villain. That though comes uninvited:—then like an uninvited guest let it be treated: begone, intruder! Leonora's charms turn vice to virtue, treason into truth; nature, who has made her the supreme object of our desires, must needs have designed her the regulator of our morals. Whatever points at her, is pointed right. We are all her due, mankind's the dower which heaven has settled on her; and he's the villain that would rob her of her tribute. I therefore, as in duty bound, will in, and pay her mine.

Lop. [*Aside.*] There he goes, i'faith; he seemed as if he had a qualm just now; but he never goes without a dram of conscience-water about him, to set matters right again.

Don John. This is her door, 'tis locked; but I have a smith about me will make her staple fly.

[*Pulls out some irons, and forces the lock.*]

Lop. [*Aside.*] Hark! hark! if he is not equipped for a housebreaker too. Very well, he has provided two strings to his bow; if he 'scapes the rape, he may be hanged upon the burglary.

Don John. There, 'tis done. So.—No watch-light burning?—[*Peeping into her chamber.*] All in darkness? so much the better, 'twill save a great deal of blushing on both sides. Methinks I feel myself mighty modest, I tremble too; that's not proper at this time. Be firm, my courage, I have business for thee.—So—how am I now?—pretty well. Then by your leave, Don Pedro, I must supply your neglect. You should not have married till you were ready for consummation; a maidenhead ought no more to lie upon a handsome bride, than an impeachment upon an innocent minister.

[*Exit into the chamber.*]

Lop. [*Coming forwards.*] Well done, well done; Gad a-marcy, my little Judas! Unfortunate Don Pedro! thou hast left thy purse in the hands of a robber; and while thou art galloping to pay the last duty to thy father, he's at least upon the trot to pay the first to thy wife. Ah, the traitor! What a capitotade of damnation will there be

cooked up for him! But softly: let's lay our ear to the door, and pick some curiosities.—I hear no noise.—There's no light; we shall have him blunder where he should not do, by and by.—Commit a rape upon her tea table perhaps, break all her china, and then she'll be sure to hang him. But hark!—now I hear—nothing; she does not say a word; she sleeps curiously.—How if she should take it all for a dream now? or her virtue should be fallen into an apoplex?—Where the pox will all this end?

Leo. [*Within.*] Jacinta! Beatrix! Fernandes! Murder! murder! help! help! help!

Lop. Now the play begins; it opens finely.

Leo. [*Within.*] Father! Alphonso! Save me! O save me!

Leo. Comedy or tragedy for a ducat! for fear of the latter, decamp Lopez. [*Exit.*]

SCENE III.—LEONORA'S Bedchamber.

LEONORA discovered in a gown, holding DON JOHN by the sleeve.

Leo. Whoever you are, villain, you shan't escape me; and though your efforts have been in vain, you shan't fail to receive the recompense of your attempt.—Help, ho, help there! help!

[DON JOHN breaks from her, but can't find the door.]

Don John. [*Aside.*] 'Sdeath, I shall be undone! where is this damned door?

Leo. He'll get away: a light there, quickly!

Enter DON GUZMAN with his sword drawn.

Don Guz. Where are you, fair angel? I come to lose my life in your defence.

Don John. [*Aside.*] That's Guzman's voice; the devil has sent him. But we are still in the dark; I have one tour yet, impudence be my aid.—[*Aloud.*] Lights there, ho! Where is the villain that durst attempt the virtuous Leonora?

Don Guz. His life shall make her satisfaction.

Don John. Or mine shall fall in his pursuit.

Don Guz. 'Tis by my hands that she shall see him die.

Don John. My sword shall lay him bleeding at her feet.

Leo. [*Aside.*] What can this mean? But here's lights at last, thank the just bounteous heaven.

Don John. Enter with the light there; but secure the door, lest the traitor 'scape my vengeance.

Enter DON PEDRO with a light, he finds LEONORA between them; both their swords drawn.

Leo. O Heavens! what is't I see?

Don John. Don Pedro here!

Don Ped. [*Aside.*] What monstrous scene is this!

Don Guz. [*Aside.*] What accident has brought him here?

Don John. [*Aside.*] Now I am intrigued indeed. [DON PEDRO steps back, and shuts the door.]

Don Ped. [*Aside.*] This mystery must unfold before we part. What torments has my fate provided me? Is this the comfort I'm to reap, to dry my tears for my poor father's death?—[*Aloud.*] Ah, Leonora!

Leo. [*Aside.*] Alas! where will this end!

[*Falling into a chair.*]

Don Ped. [*Aside.*] Naked! and thus attended at the dead of night!—my soul is froze at what I see. Confusion sits in all their faces, and in large characters I read the ruin of my honour and my love.—[*Aloud.*] Speak, statues, if you yet have power to speak, why at this time of night you are found with Leonora?—None speak!—Don John, it is from you I ought to know.

Don John. My silence may inform you.

Don Ped. Your silence does inform me of my shame, but I must have some information more; explain the whole.

Don John. I shall. You remember, Don Pedro—

Don Ped. Be quick.

Don John. You remember you charged me before you went—

Don Ped. I remember well, go on.

Don John. With the care of your honour.

Don Ped. I did: despatch.

Don John. Very well; you see Don Guzman in this apartment, you see your wife naked, and you see me, my sword in my hand; that's all.

Don Ped. [*Drawing upon DON GUZMAN.*] 'Tis here then I am to revenge my wrongs.

Don Guz. Hold!

Don Ped. Villain, defend thyself!

Leo. O Heaven!

Don Guz. Yet hear me.

Don Ped. What canst thou say?

Don Guz. The truth, as holy Heaven itself is truth. I heard the shrieks and cries of Leonora; what the occasion was I knew not, but she repeated 'em with so much vehemence, I found, whatever her distress might be, her succour must be sudden; so leaped the wall that parts our houses, and flew to her assistance. Don John can, if he please, inform you more.

Don Ped. [*Aside.*] Mankind's a villain, and this may be true;

Yet 'tis too monstrous for a quick conception.

I should be cautious how I wrong Don John.

Sure 'tis not right to balance.

I yet have but their words against their words;

I know Don John for my friend, and Guzman for my rival. What can be clearer? Yet hold: if Leonora's innocent, she may untangle all.—

[*Aloud.*] Madam, I should be glad to know (if I have so much interest left) which way your evidence will point my sword?

Leo. My lord, I'm in the same perplexity with you. All I can say is this, one of 'em came to force me, t'other to save me: but the night confounding the villany of the guilty with the generosity of the innocent, I still am ignorant to which I owe my gratitude or my resentment.

Don Guz. But, madam, did you not hear me cry I came to help you?

Leo. I own it.

Don John. And did you not hear me threaten to destroy the author of your fears?

Leo. I can't deny it.

Don Guz. What can there be more to clear me?

Don John. Or me?

Don Ped. Yet one's a villain still.—[*Aside.*] My confusion but increases: yet why confused? It is, it must be Guzman. But how came Don John here? Right. Guzman has said how he came to her aid, but Alvarada could not enter but by treason.—[*Aloud.*] Then perish—

Don Guz. Who?

Don John. Who?

Don Ped. Just gods! instruct me who.

[Knocking at the door.]

Don Fel. [Within.] Let me in, open the door!

Leo. 'Tis my father.

Don Ped. No matter, keep the door fast.—

[Aside.] I'll have this matter go no further, till I can reach the depth on't.—[Aloud.] *Don Guzman*, leave the house; I must suspend my vengeance for a time.

Don Guz. I obey you; but I'll lose my life, or show my innocence. [Exit.]

Don Fel. [Within.] Open the door; why am I kept out?

Don Ped. *Don John*, follow me by this back way.—And you, *Leonora*, retire. [Exit LEONORA.]

Don John. [Aside.] If *Don Guzman's* throat were cut, would not this bustle end?—Yes.—Why, then, if his throat be not cut, may this bustle end me. [Exit]

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—A Room in *DON GUZMAN'S* House.

Enter *DON GUZMAN* and *GALINDO*.

Don Guz. [Musing.] *Galindo*!

Gal. Sir!

Don Guz. Try if you can see *Jacinta*; let her privately know I would fain speak with her.

Gal. It shall be done, sir.

[Exit.]

Don Guz. Sure villany and impudence were never on the stretch before! This traitor has racked 'em till they crack. To what a plunge the villain's tour has brought me! *Pedro's* resentment must at last be pointed here. But that's a trifle; had he not ruined me with *Leonora*, I easily had passed him by the rest.—What's to be done? Which way shall I convince her of my innocence? The blood of him who has dared declare me guilty, may satisfy my vengeance, but not aid my love. No, I'm lost with her for ever—

Enter *JACINTA*.

Speak, is't not so, *Jacinta*? Am I not ruin'd with the virtuous *Leonora*?

Jac. One of you, I suppose, is.

Don Guz. Which dost thou think?

Jac. Why, he that came to spoil all; who should it be?

Don Guz. Prithee be serious with me if thou caust for one small moment, and advise me which way I shall take to convince her of my innocence, that it was I that came to do her service?

Jac. Why you both came to do her service, did not you?

Don Guz. Still trifling?

Jac. No, by my troth, not I!

Don Guz. Then turn thy thoughts to ease me in my torment, and be my faithful witness to her, That Heaven and Hell and all their wrath I imprecate, if ever once I knew one fleeting thought, that durst propose to me so impious an attempt. No, *Jacinta*, I love her well; but love with that humility, whatever misery I feel,

My torture ne'er shall urge me on to seize, More than her bounty gives me leave to take.

Jac. And the murrain take such a lover and his humility both, say I. Why sure, sir, you are not in earnest in this story, are you?

Don Guz. Why dost thou question it?

Jac. Because I really and seriously thought you innocent.

Don Guz. Innocent! what dost thou mean?

Jac. Mean! why what should I mean? I mean that I concluded you loved my lady to that degree you could not live without her: and that the

thought of her being given up to another made your passion flame out like mount Etna. That upon this your love got the bridle in his teeth, and ran away with you into her chamber, where that impertinent spy upon her and you, *Don John*, followed, and prevented farther proofs of your affection.

Don Guz. Why sure—

Jac. Why sure, thus I thought it was, and thus she thinks it is. If you have a mind in the depth of your discretion to convince her of your innocence—may your innocence be your reward. I'm sure were I in her place, you should never have any other from me.

Don Guz. Was there then no merit in flying to her assistance when I heard her cries?

Jac. As much as the constable and the watch might have pretended to—something to drink.

Don Guz. This is all railery; 'tis impossible she can be pleased with such an attempt.

Jac. 'Tis impossible she can be pleased with being reduced to make the attempt upon you.

Don Guz. But was this a proper way to save her blushes?

Jac. 'Twas in the dark, that's one way.

Don Guz. But it must look like downright violation.

Jac. If it did not feel like it, what did that signify? Come, sir, waggery apart, you know I'm your servant, I have given you proofs on't. Therefore don't distrust me now if I tell you, this quarrel may be made up with the wife, though perhaps not with the husband. In short, she thinks you were first in her chamber, and has not the worse opinion of you for it; she makes allowance for your sufferings, and has still love enough for you, not to be displeased with the utmost proofs you can give, that you have still a warm remain for her.

Don Guz. If this be true, and that she thought 'twas me, why did she cry out to expose me?

Jac. Because at that time she did not think 'twas you. Will that content you? And now she does think 'twas you, your business is to let her think so on; for in a word, I can see she's concerned at the danger she has brought you into, and I believe would be heartily glad to see you well out on't.

Don Guz. 'Tis impossible she can forgive me.

Jac. Oons!—Now Heaven forgive me, for I had a great oath upon the very tip of my tongue; you'd make one mad with your impossibles, and your innocence, and your humilities. 'Sdeath, sir, d'you think a woman makes no distinction between the assaults of a man she likes and one she don't? My lady hates *Don John*, and if she thought 'twas

he had done this job, she'd hang him for't in her own garters ; she likes you, and if you should do such another, you might still die in your bed like a bishop for her.

Don Guz. Well, I'll dispute no farther. I put myself into thy hands. What am I to do next ?

Jac. Why, do as she bids you ; be in the way at the old rendezvous, she'll take the first occasion she can to speak to you ; and when you meet, do as I bid you, and instead of your innocent and humble, be guilty and resolute. Your mistress is now married, sir, consider that. She has changed her situation, and so must you your battery. Attack a maid gently, a wife warmly, and be as rugged with a widow as you can. Good bye t'ye, sir.

[*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE II.—LEONORA'S Apartment.

Enter DON PEDRO.

Don Ped. In what distraction have I pass'd this night !

Sure I shall never close my eyes again.

No rack can equal what I feel.

Wounded in both my honour and my love ;

They have pierced me in two tender parts.

Yet could I take my just revenge,

It would in some degree assuage my smart.

Oh, guide me Heaven to that cordial drop !—

Hold ! a glance of light I think begins to—yes—

right. When yesterday I brought Don John hither,

was not Don Felix much disturbed ?—He was. And

why ?—That may be worth inquiring. But something more occurs. At my arrival in this city,

Was I not told two cavaliers were warm

In the pursuit of Leonora ?

One I remember well they named ; 'twas Guzman :

The other I am yet a stranger to.

I fear I shall not be so long—'Tis Alvarada ;

O the traitor !—yet I may wrong him much. I

have Guzman's own confession that he passed the

wall to come to Leonora.—Oh, but 'twas to her

assistance.—

And so it might, and he a villain still.

There are assistances of various sorts.—

What were her wants ? That's dark.—But what—

They were, he came to her assistance. [soe'er

Death be his portion for his ready service !

Enter DON FELIX.

Don Fel. You avoid me, Don Pedro ; 'tis not well. Am I not your father, have you not reason to believe I am your friend ?

Don Ped. I have.

Don Fel. Why do you not then treat me like a father and a friend ? The mystery you make to me of last night's disturbance I take unkindly from you. Come tell me your grief, that if I can I may assuage it.

Don Ped. Nothing but vengeance can give me ease.

Don Fel. If I desire to know your wrongs, 'tis to assist you in revenging them.

Don Ped. Know then, that last night in this apartment I found Don Guzman and Don John.

Don Fel. Guzman and Alvarada !

Don Ped. Yes ; and Leonora almost naked between them, crying out for aid.

Don Fel. Were they both guilty ?

Don Ped. One was come to force her, t'other to rescue her.

Don Fel. Which was the criminal ?

Don Ped. Of that I yet am ignorant. They accuse each other.

Don Fel. Can't your wife determine it ?

Don Ped. The darkness of the night put it out of her power.

Don Fel. But I perhaps may bring some light I have part in the affront : [to aid you.

And though my arm's too old and weak to serve you,

My counsel may be useful to your vengeance.

Know then, that Don Guzman has a long time pursued my daughter ; and I as resolutely refused his suit : which however has not hindered him from searching all occasions to see and speak to her. Don John, on his side—

Don Ped. Don John's my friend, and I am confident—

Don Fel. That confidence destroys you. Hear my charge, and be yourself his judge. He too has been a pressing suitor to my daughter.

Don Ped. Impossible !

Don Fel. To me myself, he has owned his love to her.

Don Ped. Good gods ! Yet still this leaves the mystery where it was ; this charge is equal.

Don Fel. 'Tis true ; but yonder's one (if you can make her speech) I have reason to believe can tell us more.—Ho, Jacinta !

Enter JACINTA.

Jac. Do you call me, sir ?

Don Fel. Yes ; Don Pedro would speak with you.—[*Aside to DON PEDRO.*] I'll leave you with her ; press her both by threats and promises, and if you find your wife in fault, old as I am, her father too, I'll raise my arm to plunge this dagger in her breast ; and by that fermeté convince the world, my honour's dearer to me than my child.

[*Exit.*]

Don Ped. [*Aside.*] Heaven grant me power to stifle my rage, till 'tis time to let my vengeance fly !—Jacinta, come near : I have some business with you.

Jac. [*Aside.*] His business with me at this time can be good for nothing, I doubt.—[*Aloud.*] What commands have you, sir, for me ? for I'm not very well.

Don Ped. What's your disorder ?

Jac. A little sort of a something towards an ague, I think.

Don Ped. You don't seem so ill but you may tell me—

Jac. Oh, I can tell you nothing, sir, I assure you.

Don Ped. You answer me before you hear my question. That looks as if you knew—

Jac. I know that what you are going to ask me, is a secret I'm out at.

Don Ped. [*Offering her a purse.*] Then this shall let thee into it.

Jac. I know nothing of the matter.

Don Ped. Come, tell me all, and take thy reward.

Jac. I know nothing of the matter, I say.

Don Ped. [*Drawing his sword.*] Speak ; or by all the flame and fire of hell eternal—

Jac. O Lord ! O Lord ! O Lord !

Don Ped. Speak, or th'art dead.

Jac. But if I do speak, shan't I be dead for all that?

Don Ped. Speak, and thou art safe.

Jac. Well—O Lard!—I'm so frighted!—But if I must speak then—O dear heart!—give me the purse.

Don Ped. There.

Jac. Why truly, between a purse in one's hand—and—a sword in one's guts, I think there's little room left for debate.

Don Ped. Come, begin, I'm impatient.

Jac. Begin! let me see; where shall I begin? at Don Guzman, I think.

Don Ped. What of him?

Jac. Why he has been in love with my lady these six years.

Don Ped. I know it, but how has she received him?

Jac. Received him! Why—as young maids use to receive handsome fellows; at first ill, afterwards better.

Don Ped. [*Aside.*] Furies!—[*Aloud.*] Did they ever meet?

Jac. A little.

Don Ped. By day or night?

Jac. Both.

Don Ped. Distraction! Where was their rendezvous?

Jac. Where they could not do one another much good.

Don Ped. As how?

Jac. As through a hole in a wall.

Don Ped. The strumpet banters me.—Be serious, Insolence, or I shall spoil your gaiety; I'm not disposed to mirth.

Jac. Why I am serious, if you like my story the better for't.

Don Ped. [*Aside.*] How miserable a wretch am I!

Jac. I tell you there's a wall parts their two houses, and in that wall there's a hole. How the wall came by the hole, I can't tell; mayhap by chance, mayhap by no chance; but there 'tis, and there they use to prattle.

Don Ped. And this is truth?

Jac. I can't bate you a word on't, sir.

Don Ped. When did they meet there last?

Jac. Yesterday; I suppose 'twas only to bid one another adieu.

Don Ped. Ah, Jacinta, thou hast pierced my soul!

Jac. [*Aside.*] And yet I han't told you half I could tell you, my don.

Don Ped. Where is this place you speak of?

Jac. There 'tis, if you are curious.

Don Ped. When they would speak with one another, what's the call?

Jac. Tinkle, tinkle.

Don Ped. A bell?

Jac. It is.

Don Ped. Ring!

Jac. What do you mean, sir?

Don Ped. [*Hastily.*] Ring!

Jac. 'Tis done. [*She makes the signal.*]

Don Ped. [*Aside.*] I'll make use of her to examine him.—[*Aloud.*] Does he come?

Jac. Not yet.

Don Ped. Pull again.

Jac. You must give him time, sir; my lady always does so.

Don Ped. I hear something.

Jac. 'Tis he.

Don Guz. [*Within.*] Who's there?

Don Ped. [*Softly.*] Say you are Leonora.

[*Dumb show of her unwillingness, and his threatening.*]

Jac. [*Softly.*] 'Tis Leonora.

Don Guz. What are your commands, madam? Is it possible so unfortunate a wretch as I can be capable of serving you?

[*DON PEDRO whispers JACINTA, who seems backward to speak.*]

Jac. I come to ask you, how you could so far forget that infinite regard you have professed, to make an attempt so dangerous both to yourself and me; and which, with all the esteem and love I have ever borne you, you scarce could hope I ever should forgive you.

Don Guz. Alas, my hopes and fears were vanish'd too.

My counsel was my love and my despair.

If they advised me wrong, of them complain, For it was you who made 'em my directors.

Don Ped. [*Aside.*] The villain owns the fact.

It seems he thinks

He has not much to fear from her resentment.

Oh, torture!

Enter LEONORA.

Jac. [*Aside.*] So, she's here; that's as I expected: now we are blown up.

Leo. [*Not seeing them.*] If I don't mistake, I heard Don Guzman's call. I can't refuse to answer it; forgive me, gods, and let my woman's weakness plead my cause.—How! my husband here! Nay then—

Don Ped. You seem disordered, madam; pray what may be the cause?

Leo. [*Confused.*] I don't know really; I'm not—I don't know that—

Don Ped. You did not know that I was here, I guess.

Leo. Yes I did, and—came to speak with you.

Don Ped. I'm not at present in a talking humour,

But if your tongue is set to conversation, There's one behind the wall will entertain you.

Don Guz. But is it possible, fair Leonora, that you can pardon my attempt?

Don Ped. [*To LEONORA.*] You hear him, madam; he dares own it to you.

Leo. [*Aside.*] Jacinta winks; I guess what scene they have been acting here. My part is now to play.—[*To DON PEDRO.*] I see, sir, he dares own it: nor is he the first lover has presumed beyond the countenance he ever has received. Pray draw near, and hear what he has more to say: it is my interest you should know the depth of all has ever passed between us.—

I fain would know, Don Guzman, whether In the whole conduct of my life, you've known One step that could encourage you to hope

I ever could be yours,

But on the terms of honour which you sought me?

Don Guz. Not one.

Leo. Why then should you believe I could

Forgive the taking that by force which you

Already were convinced

I valued more the keeping than my life?

Don Guz. Had my love been as temperate as I with your reason had perhaps debated. [yours,

But not in reason, but in flames, I flew
To Leonora.

Leo. If strong temptation be allow'd a plea,
Vice, in the worst of shapes, has much to urge.
No,
Could anything have shaken me in virtue,
It must have been the strength of 'it in you.
Had you shone bright enough to dazzle me,
I blindly might have miss'd the path I meant
To tread: but now you have clear'd my sight for
ever.

If therefore from this moment more you dare
To let me know one thought of love,
Though in the humblest style, expect to be
A sacrifice to him you attempt to wrong.
Farewell!

[*She retires from him.*]

Don Guz. Oh, stay and hear me! I have
wronged myself, I'm innocent; by all that's sacred,
just, and good, I'm innocent!

Don Ped. [*Aside.*] What does he mean?

Don Guz. I have owned a fact I am not guilty
of; Jacinta can inform you, she knows I never—
Jac. I know! the man's mad. Pray be gone,
sir, my lady will hear no more.—I'll shut him out,
madam, shan't I?

Leo. I have no farther business with him.

[*JACINTA shuts up the hole.*]

Enter ISABELLA hastily.

Isab. O Heavens, Leonora, where are you?—
Don Pedro, you can assist me better.

Leo. What's the matter?

Don Ped. What is it, madam, I can serve you in?

Isab. In what the peace of my whole life consists,
the safety of my brother. Don John's servant
has this moment left me a letter for him, which I
have opened, knowing there is an animosity of
some time between 'em.

Don Ped. Well, madam!

Isab. O dear, it is a challenge, and what to do
I know not! If I show it my brother, he'll immediately
fly to the place appointed: and if I don't,
he'll be accused of cowardice. One way I risk his
life, t'other I ruin his honour.

Don Ped. What would you have me do, madam?

Isab. I'll tell you, sir: I only beg you'll go to
the place where Don John expects him; tell him I
have intercepted his letter, and make him promise
you he'll send no more. By this generous charity
you may hinder two men (whose piques are on a
frivolous occasion) from murdering one another:
and by this good office you'll repay the small debt
you owe my brother for flying last night to Leonora's
succour; and doubly pay the obligation you have
to me upon the same occasion.

Don Ped. What obligation, madam? I am
ignorant; pray inform me.

Isab. 'Twas I, sir, that first heard Leonora's
cries, and raised my brother to her aid. Pray let
me receive the same assistance from your prudence
which you have had from my care and my brother's
generosity. But pray lose no time. Don John
is perhaps already on the spot, and not meeting my
brother, may send a second message, which may
be fatal.

Don Ped. Madam, be at rest; you shall be
satisfied, I'll go this moment. I'll only ask you
first whether you are sure you heard my wife call
out for succour, before your brother passed the
wall?

Isab. I did; why do you ask that question?

Don Ped. I have a reason, you may be sure.—

[*Aside.*] Just Heaven, I adore thee! the truth at
last shines clear, and by that villain Alvarada I'm
betrayed. But enough, I'll make use of this occasion
for my vengeance.—[*To ISABELLA.*] Where,
madam, is it Don John is waiting?

Isab. But here, in a small field behind the
garden.

Don Ped. [*Aside.*] His blood shall do me reason
for his treachery.

Isab. Will you go there directly?

Don Ped. I will. Be satisfied. [*Exit.*]

Leo. You weep, Isabella.

Isab. You see my trouble for a brother, for
whom I would die, and a lover for whom I would
live. They both are authors of my grief.

Leo. They both are instruments of my mis-
fortune. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*A Field adjoining DON FELIX'S Garden.*

Enter LOPEZ.

Lop. O ho, my good signor Don John, you are
mistaken in your man! I am your humble valet,
'tis true, and I am to obey you: but when you
have got the devil in your body, and are upon your
rantipole adventures, you shall Quixote it by your-
self for Lopez. Yonder he is, waiting for poor
Guzman, with a sword of a fathom and a half,
a dagger for close engagement; and (if I don't mis-
take) a pocket pistol for extraordinary occasions.
I think I am not in the wrong to keep a little out
of the way. These matters will end in a court of
justice, or I'm wrong in my foresight. Now that
being a place where I am pretty well known, and
not overmuch reputed, I believe 'tis best, neither
to come in for prisoner nor evidence. But hold;
yonder comes another Toledo. Don Guzman I
presume; but I presume wrong; 'tis—who is't?

Don Pedro, by all the powers! What the pox does
he here, or what the pox do I here? I'm sure as
matters stand, I ought to fly him like a creditor;
but he sees me, 'tis too late to slip him.

Enter DON PEDRO.

Don Ped. How now, Lopez, where are you
going?

Lop. I'm going, sir, I—I'm going—if you please
I'm going about my business.

Don Ped. From whence do you come?

Lop. Only, only, sir, from—taking the air a
little, I'm mightily muddled with a whur—round
about in my head for this day or two; I'm going
home to be let blood, as fast as I can, sir.

Don Ped. Hold, sir, I'll let you blood here.—
[*Aside.*] This rascal may have borne some part in
this late adventure: He's a coward, I'll try to
frighten it out of him.—[*Aloud.*] You traitor you,
y'are dead!

[*Seizes LOPEZ by the collar, and draws his poniard.*]

Lop. Mercy, Don Pedro!

[*Kneeling.*]

Don Ped. Are you not a villain?

Lop. Yes, if you please.

Don Ped. Is there so great a one upon earth?

Lop. With respect to my master; no.

Don Ped. Prepare then to die.

Lop. Give me but time, and I will. But noble Don Pedro, just Don Pedro, generous Don Pedro, what is it I have done?

Don Ped. What if thou darest deny, I'll plunge this dagger deep into thy throat, and drive the falsehood to thy heart again. Therefore take heed, and on thy life declare; didst thou not this last night open my doors to let Don Guzman in?

Lop. Don Guzman!

Don Ped. Don Guzman? Yes, Don Guzman, traitor, him!

Lop. Now may the sky crush me, if I let in Don Guzman.

Don Ped. Who did you let in then? It wan't your master sure! if it was him, you did your duty, I have no more to say.

Lop. Why then if I let in anybody else, I'm a son of a whore. [*Rising.*]

Don Ped. Did he order you beforehand, or did you do't upon his knocking?

Lop. Why he; I'll tell you, sir, he—pray put up that brilliant; it sparkles so in my eyes, it almost blinds me.—[*DON PEDRO sheathes his poniard.*] Thank you, sir.—Why, sir, I'll tell you just how the matter was, but I hope you won't consider me as a party?

Don Ped. Go on, thou art safe.

Lop. Why then, sir, (when for our sins,) you had left us, says my master to me, Lopez, says he, go and stay at old Don Felix's house, till Don Pedro returns, they'll pass thee for his servant, and think he has ordered thee to stay there. And then says he, dost hear, open me the door by Leonora's apartment to-night, for I have a little business, says he, to do there.

Don Ped. [*Aside.*] Perfidious wretch!

Lop. Indeed, I was at first a little wrosted, and stood off; being suspicious (for I knew the man) that there might be some ill intentions. But he knew me too, takes me upon the weak side, whips out a long sword, and by the same means makes me do the thing as you have made me discover it.—[*Aside.*] There's neither liberty nor property in this land, since the blood of the Bourbons came amongst us.

Don Ped. Then you let him in, as he bid you?

Lop. I did: if I had not, I had never lived to tell you the story. Yes, I let him in.

Don Ped. And what followed?

Lop. Why he followed.

Don Ped. What?

Lop. His inclinations.

Don Ped. Which way?

Lop. The old way; to a woman.

Don Ped. Confound him!

Lop. In short, he got to madam's chamber, and before he had been there long, (though you know, sir, a little time goes a great way in some matters) I heard such a clutter of small shot, murder! murder! murder! rape! fire! help! and so forth.—But hold, here he comes himself, and can give you a more circumstantial account of the skirmish. [*Exit.*]

Don Ped. I thank thee, Heaven, at last, for having pointed me to the victim I am to sacrifice.

Enter DON JOHN.

Villain, defend thyself!

[*Drawing.*]

Don John. What do you mean?

Don Ped. To punish a traitor.

Don John. Where is he?

Don Ped. In the heart of a sworn friend.

Don John. [*Aside.*] I saw Lopez go from him; without doubt he has told him all.—[*Aloud.*] Of what am I suspected?

Don Ped. Of betraying the greatest trust that man could place in man.

Don John. And by whom am I accused.

Don Ped. By me. Have at thy traitor's heart.

Don John. Hold! and be not quite a madman! Pedro, you know me well. You know I am not backward upon these occasions, nor shall I refuse you any satisfaction you'll demand; but first, I will be heard, and tell you, that for a man of sense, you are pleased to make very odd conclusions.

Don Ped. Why, what is't possible thou canst invent to clear thyself?

Don John. To clear myself! Of what? I'm to be thanked for what I have done, and not reproached. I find I have been an ass, and pushed my friendship to that point, you find not virtue in yourself enough to conceive it in another. But henceforward I shall be a better husband on't.

Don Ped. I should be loath to find ingratitude could e'er be justly charged upon me: but after what your servant has confessed—

Don John. My servant! right, my servant! the very thing I guessed. Fy, fy, Don Pedro! is't from a servant's mouth a friend condemns a friend? or can servants always judge at what their masters' outward actions point? But some allowances I should make for the wild agitations you must needs be in. I'm therefore calm, and thus far pass all by.

Don Ped. If you are innocent, Heaven be my aid, that I may find you so. But still—

Don John. But still you wrong me, if you still suspect. Hear then, in short, my part of this adventure. In order to acquit myself of the charge you laid upon me in your absence, I went last night, just as 'twas dark, to view the several approaches to the house where you had left your wife; and I observed not far from one of the back doors two persons in close eager conference. I was disguised, so ventured to pass near 'em, and by a word or two I heard, I found 'twas Guzman talking to Jacinta. My concern for your honour made me at first resolve to call him to an immediate account. But then reflecting that I might possibly overhear some part of their discourse, and by that judge of Leonora's thoughts, I reined my passion in; and by the help of an advancing but-tress, which kept me from their sight, I learned the black conspiracy. Don Guzman said, he had great complaint to make; and since his honourable love had been so ill returned, he could with ease forgive himself, if by some rougher means he should procure what prayers, and tears, and sighs had urged in vain.

Don Ped. Go on.

Don John. His kind assistant closed smoothly with him, and informed him with what ease that very night she'd introduce him to her chamber. At last they parted, with this agreement, that at some overture in a wall, he should expect her to inform him when Leonora was in bed, and all the coast was clear.

Don Ped. Despatch the rest.—[*Aside.*] Is't possible after all he should be innocent!

Don John. I must confess the resolution taken made me tremble for you. How to prevent it now and for ever was my next care. I immediately ordered Lopez to go lie at Don Felix's and to open me the door when all the family were in bed. He did as I directed him. I entered, and in the dark found my way to Leonora's apartment; I found the door open, at which I was surprised. I thought I heard some stirring in her chamber, and in an instant heard her cry to aid. At this I drew, and rushed into the room; which Guzman alarmed at, cried out to her assistance. His ready impudence, I must confess, at first quite struck me speechless; but in a moment I regained my tongue, and loud proclaimed the traitor.

Don Ped. Is't possible!

Don John. Yet more: your arrival hindering me at that time from taking vengeance for your wrong, I at this instant expect him here, to punish him (with heaven's righteous aid) for daring to attempt my ruin with the man, whose friendship I prefer to all the blessings Heaven and earth dispense. And now, Don Pedro, I have told you this, if still you have a mind to take my life, I shall defend it with the self-same warmth I intended to expose it in your service. [Draws.]

Don Ped. [*Aside.*] If I did not know he was in love with Leonora, I could be easily surprised with what he has told me. But—but yet 'tis certain he has destroyed the proofs against him; and if I only hold him guilty as a lover, why must Don Guzman pass for innocent? Good Gods, I am again returning to my doubts!

Don John. [*Aside.*] I have at last reduced him to a balance, But one lie more toss'd in will turn the scale.—[*Aloud.*] One obligation more, my friend, you owe me;

I thought to have let it pass, but it shall out. Know then, I loved, like you, the beauteous Leonora; But from the moment I observed how deep Her dart had pierced you, I tore my passion from my bleeding heart, And sacrificed my happiness to yours. Now I've no more to plead; if still you think Your vengeance is my due, come pay it me.

Don Ped. Rather ten thousand poniards strike O Alvarada! [me dead.] Can you forgive a wild distracted friend? Gods! whither was my jealous frenzy leading me? Can you forget this barbarous injury?

Don John. I can: no more. But for the future, think me what I am, a faithful and a zealous friend. Retire, and leave me here. In a few moments I hope to bring you farther proofs on't. Guzman I instantly expect; leave me to do you justice on him.

Don Ped. That must not be. My revenge can ne'er be satisfied by any other hand but this.

Don John. Then let that do't. You'll in a moment have an opportunity.

Don Ped. You mistake, he won't be here.

Don John. How so?

Don Ped. He has not had your challenge. His sister intercepted it, and desired I'd come to prevent the quarrel.

Don John. What then is to be done?

Don Ped. I'll go and find him out immediately.

Don John. Very well: or hold—[*Aside.*] I must hinder 'em from talking, gossiping may discover me.—[*Aloud.*] Yes: let's go and find him: or, let me see—ay—'twill do better.

Don Ped. What?

Don John. Why—that the punishment should suit the crime.

Don Ped. Explain.

Don John. Attack him by his own laws of war. —'Twas in the night he would have had your honour, and in the night you ought to have his life.

Don Ped. His treason cannot take the guilt from mine.

Don John. There is no guilt in fair retaliation. When 'tis a point of honour founds the quarrel, the laws of swordmen must be kept, 'tis true: but if a thief glides in to seize my treasure, methinks I may return the favour on my dagger's point, as well as with my sword of ceremony six times as long.

Don Ped. Yet still the nobler method I would choose; it better satisfies the vengeance of a man of honour.

Don John. I own it, were you sure you should succeed: but the events of combats are uncertain. Your enemy may 'scape you: you perhaps may only wound him; you may be parted. Believe me, Pedro, the injury's too great for a punctilio satisfaction.

Don Ped. Well, guide me as you please, so you direct me quickly to my vengeance. What do you propose?

Don John. That which is easy, as 'tis just to execute. The wall he passed, to attempt your wife, let us get over to prevent his doing so any more. 'Twill let us in to a private apartment by his garden, where every evening in his amorous solitudes he spends some time alone, and where I guess his late fair scheme was drawn. The deed done, we can retreat the way we entered; let me be your pilot, 'tis now e'en dark, and the most proper time.

Don Ped. Lead on; I'll follow you.

Don John. [*Aside.*] How many villanies I'm forced to act, to keep one secret! [Exit.]

SCENE II.—DON GUZMAN'S Apartment.

DON GUZMAN discovered sitting.

Don Guz. With what rigour does this unfaithful woman treat me! Is't possible it can be she, who appeared to love me with so much tenderness? How little stress is to be laid upon a woman's heart? Sure they're not worth those anxious cares they give.—[*Rising.*] Then burst my chains, and give me room to search for nobler pleasures. I feel my heart begin to mutiny for liberty; there is a spirit in it yet, will struggle hard for freedom: but solitude's the worst of seconds.—Ho, Sancho! Galindo! who waits there? Bring some lights. Where are you?

Enter GALINDO, rubbing his eyes, and drunk.

Gal. I can't well tell. Do you want me, sir?

Don Guz. Yes, sir, I want you. Why am I left in the dark? what were you doing?

Gal. Doing, sir! I was doing—what one does when one sleeps, sir.

Don Guz. Have you no light without?

Gal. [*Yawning.*] Light!—No, sir,—I have no light. I am used to hardship. I can sleep in the dark.

Don Guz. You have been drinking, you rascal, you are drunk!

Gal. I have been drinking, sir, 'tis true, but I am not drunk. Every man that is drunk, has been drinking; confessed. But every man that has been drinking, is not drunk. Confess that too.

Don Guz. Who is't has put you in this condition, you sot?

Gal. A very honest fellow: Madam Leonora's coachman, nobody else. I have been making a little debauch with Madam Leonora's coachman; yes.

Don Guz. How came you to drink with him, beast?

Gal. Only *par complaisance*, sir. The coachman was to be drunk upon madam's wedding; and I being a friend, was desired to take part.

Don Guz. And so, you villain, you can make yourself merry with what renders me miserable!

Gal. No, sir, no; 'twas the coachman was merry: I drank with tears in my eyes. The remembrance of your misfortunes, made me so sad, so sad, that every cup I swallowed, was like a cup of poison to me.

Don Guz. Without doubt.

Gal. Yes; and to mortify myself upon melancholy matters, I believe I took down fifty. Yes.

Don Guz. Go fetch some lights, you drunken sot, you!

Gal. I will if I can find the door, that is to say.—The devil's in the door! I think 'tis grown too little for me.—[*Feeling for the door, and running against it.*] Shrunk this wet weather, I presume.

[*Exit.*]

Don Guz. Absence, the old remedy for love, must e'en be mine; to stay and brave the danger were presumption: Farewell, Valencia, then! and farewell, Leonora! And if thou canst, my heart, redeem thy liberty; secure it by a farewell eternal to her sex.

Re-enter GALINDO, with a candle.

Gal. Here's light, sir.—[*He falls and puts it out.*] So!

Don Guz. Well done! You sottish rascal, come no more in my sight.

[*Exit into an adjoining chamber.*]

Gal. These boards are so uneven!—You shall see now I shall neither find the candle—nor the candlestick; it shan't be for want of searching however.—[*Rising, and feeling about for the candle.*] O ho, have I got you! Enough, I'll look for your companion to-morrow.

Enter DON PEDRO and DON JOHN.

Don Ped. Where are we now?

Don John. We are in the apartment I told you of—softly—I hear something stir.—Ten to one but 'tis he.

Gal. Don't I hear somewhat?—No.—When one has wine in one's head, one has such a bustle in one's ears.

Don Ped. [*To DON JOHN.*] Who is that talking to himself?

Don John. 'Tis his servant, I know his voice, keep still.

Gal. Well; since my master has banished me his sight, I'll redeem by my obedience what I have lost by my debauch. I'll go sleep twelve hours in some melancholy hole where the devil shan't find me. Yes.

[*Exit.*]

Don John. He's gone; but hush, I hear somebody coming.

Don Guz. Ho, there! will nobody bring light?

[*Behind the scene.*]

Don Ped. 'Tis Guzman.

Don John. 'Tis so, prepare.

Don Ped. Shall I own my weakness? I feel an inward check; I wish this could be done some other way.

Don John. Distraction all! is this a time to balance? Think on the injury he would have done you, 'twill fortify your arm, and guide your dagger to his heart.

Don Ped. Enough, I'll hesitate no more; be satisfied, hark! he's coming.

Re-enter DON GUZMAN, he crosses the stage.

Don Guz. I think these rogues are resolved to leave me in the dark all night.

[*Exit.*]

Don John. Now's your time; follow him, and strike home.

Don Ped. To his heart, if my dagger will reach it.

[*Exit.*]

Don John. [*Aside.*] If one be killed, I'm satisfied; 'tis no great matter which.

Re-enter DON GUZMAN, DON PEDRO following him, with his dagger ready to strike.

Don Guz. My chamber-door's locked, and I think I hear somebody tread.—Who's there?—Nobody answers. But still I hear something stir. Hold there! Sancho, are you all drunk? Some lights here quickly.

[*Passes by the corner where DON JOHN stands, and goes off the stage; DON PEDRO following him.*]

Don Ped. [*Aside.*] I think I'm near him now.—Traitor, take that! my wife has sent it thee.

[*Stabs DON JOHN.*]

Don John. Ah, I'm dead!

Don Ped. Then thou hast thy due.

Don John. I have indeed, 'tis I that have betrayed thee.

Don Ped. And 'tis I that am revenged on thee for doing it.

Don John. I would have forced thy wife.

Don Ped. Die then with the regret to have failed in thy attempt.

Don John. Farewell, if thou canst forgive me—

[*Dies.*]

Don Ped. I have done the deed: there's nothing left, but to make our escape. Don John, where are you? let's be gone, I hear the servants coming.

[*Knocking at the door.*]

Lop. [*Without.*] Open there quickly, open the door!

Don Ped. That's Lopez, we shall be discovered. But 'tis no great matter, the crime will justify the execution. But where's Don John?—Don John, where are you?

[*Knocking at the door.*]

Lop. [*Without.*] Open the door there, quickly!—Madam, I saw 'em both pass the wall, the devil's in it if any good comes on't.

Leo. [*Without.*] I am frightened out of my senses!—Ho, Isabella!

Don Ped. 'Tis Leonora.—She's welcome.—With her own eyes let her see her Guzman dead.

Enter DON GUZMAN, LEONORA, ISABELLA, JACINTA, and LOPEZ, with lights.

Don Ped. Ha! what is't I see? Guzman alive? Then who art thou? [*Looking on DON JOHN.*]

Don Guz. Guzman alive! Yes, Pedro, Guzman is alive.

Don Ped. Then Heaven is just, and there's a traitor dead.

Isab. [*Weeping.*] Alas, Don John!

Lop. [*Looking upon DON JOHN.*] Buenas noches!

Don Guz. What has produced this bloody scene?

Don Ped. 'Tis I have been the actor in't; my poniard, Guzman, I intended in your heart. I

thought your crime deserved it: but I did you wrong, and my hand in searching the innocent, has by heaven's justice been directed to the guilty. Don John, with his last breath, confessed himself the offender. Thus my revenge is satisfied, and you are cleared.

Don Guz. Good Heaven, how equitable are thy judgments!

Don Ped. [*To LEONORA.*] Come, madam, my honour now is satisfied, and if you please my love may be so too.

Leo. If it is not,

You to yourself alone shall own your smart,

For where I've given my hand, I'll give my heart. [*Exeunt omnes.*]

EPILOGUE.

SPOKEN BY MRS. OLDFIELD.

WHAT say you, sirs, d'ye think my lady'll 'scape? 'Tis devilish hard to stand a favourite's rape. Should Guzman, like Don John, break in upon her,

For all her virtue, heaven have mercy on her! Her strength, I doubt, 's in his irresolution, There's wondrous charms in vigorous execution. Indeed you men are fools, you won't believe What dreadful things we women can forgive: I know but one we never do pass by, And that you plague us with eternally;

When in your courtly fears to disoblige,
You won't attack the town which you besiege:
Your guns are light, and planted out of reach:
D'ye think with billets-doux to make a breach?
'Tis small-shot all, and not a stone will fly:
Walls fall by cannon, and by firing nigh:
In sluggish dull blockades you keep the field,
And starve us ere we can with honour yield.
In short—
We can't receive those terms you gently tender,
But storm, and we can answer our surrender.

THE CONFEDERACY.

A Comedy.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

GRIBE, } *two rich Money Scriveners.*
MONEYTRAP, }
DICK AMLET, a Gamester, Son to MRS. AMLET.
BRASS, his Companion, passes for his Valet-de-Chambre.
CLIP, a Goldsmith.
JESSAMIN, Footboy to CLARISSA.
A Constable.
CLARISSA, Wife to GRIPE, an expensive luxurious Woman, a great Admirer of Quality.

ARAMINTA, Wife to MONEYTRAP, very intimate with CLARISSA, of the same Humour.
CORINNA, Daughter to GRIPE by a former Wife, a good Fortune, young, and kept very close by her Father.
FLIPPANTA, Maid to CLARISSA.
MRS. AMLET, a Seller of all Sorts of private Affairs to the Ladies.
MRS. CLOGGIT, her Neighbour.

SCENE,—LONDON.

PROLOGUE.

SPOKEN BY A SHABBY POET.

YE gods ! what crime had my poor father done,
That you should make a poet of his son ?
Or is't for some great services of his,
Y'are pleased to compliment his boy—with this ?

[Showing his crown of laurel.]

The honour, I must needs confess, is great,
If, with his crown, you'd tell him where to eat.
'Tis well.—But I have more complaints—look here !

[Showing his ragged coat.]

Hark ye :—D'ye think this suit good winter wear ?
In a cold morning, wuh—at a lord's gate,
How you have let the porter let me wait !
You'll say, perhaps, you knew I'd get no harm,
You'd given me fire enough to keep me warm.
Ah !—

A world of blessings to that fire we owe ;
Without it I'd ne'er made this princely show.
I have a brother too, now in my sight,

[Looking behind the scenes.]

A busy man amongst us here to-night :

Your fire has made him play a thousand pranks,
For which, no doubt, you've had his daily thanks ;
He has thank'd you, first, for all his decent plays,
Where he so nick'd it, when he writ for praise.
Next for his meddling with some folks in black,
And bringing—souse !—a priest upon his back ;
For building houses here to oblige the peers,
And fetching all their house about his ears ;
For a new play, he's now thought fit to write,
To soothe the town—which they—will damn to-night.

These benefites are such, no man can doubt
But he'll go on, and set your fancy out,
Till for reward of all his noble deeds,
At last like other sprightly folks he speeds :
Has this great recompense fix'd on his brow
At famed Parnassus ; has your leave to bow
And walk about the streets—equipp'd—as I am now.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—Covent Garden.

Enter MRS. AMLET and MRS. CLOGGIT, meeting.

Mrs. Aml. Good-morrow, neighbour ; good-morrow, neighbour Cloggit ! How does all at your house this morning ?

Mrs. Clog. Thank you kindly, Mrs. Amlet, thank you kindly ; how do you do, I pray ?

Mrs. Aml. At the old rate, neighbour, poor and honest ; these are hard times, good luck !

Mrs. Clog. If they are hard with you, what are they with us ? You have a good trade going, all the great folks in town help you off with your merchandise.

Mrs. Aml. Yes, they do help us off with 'em indeed ; they buy all.

Mrs. Clog. And pay—

Mrs. Aml. For some.

Mrs. Clog. Well, 'tis a thousand pities, Mrs. Amlet, they are not as ready at one as they are at

t'other: for, not to wrong 'em, they give very good rates.

Mrs. Aml. Oh, for that, let us do 'em justice, neighbour; they never make two words upon the price, all they haggle about is the day of payment.

Mrs. Clog. There's all the dispute, as you say.

Mrs. Aml. But that's a wicked one. For my part, neighbour, I'm just tired off my legs with trotting after 'em; besides, it eats out all our profit. Would you believe it, Mrs. Cloggit, I have worn out four pair of pattens with following my old lady Youthful, for one set of false teeth, and but three pots of paint.

Mrs. Clog. Look you there now!

Mrs. Aml. If they would but once let me get enough by 'em, to keep a coach to carry me a-dunning after 'em, there would be some conscience in it.

Mrs. Clog. Ay, that were something. But now you talk of conscience, Mrs. Amlet, how do you speed amongst your city customers?

Mrs. Aml. My city customers! now by my truth, neighbour, between the city and the court (with reverence be it spoken) there's not a—to choose. My ladies in the city, in times past, were as full of gold as they were of religion, and as punctual in their payments as they were in their prayers; but since they have set their minds upon quality, adieu one, adieu t'other, their money and their consciences are gone, Heaven knows where. There is not a goldsmith's wife to be found in town, but's as hard-hearted as an ancient judge, and as poor as a towering duchess.

Mrs. Clog. But what the murrain have they to do with quality! why don't their husbands make 'em mind their shops?

Mrs. Aml. Their husbands! their husbands, sayest thou, woman? Alack! alack! they mind their husbands, neighbour, no more than they do a sermon.

Mrs. Clog. Good lack a-day, that women born of sober parents, should be prone to follow ill examples! But now we talk of quality, when did you hear of your son Richard, Mrs. Amlet? My daughter Flipp says she met him t'other day in a laced coat, with three fine ladies, his footman at his heels, and as gay as a bridegroom.

Mrs. Aml. Is it possible? Ah the rogue! Well, neighbour, all's well that ends well; but Dick will be hanged.

Mrs. Clog. That were pity.

Mrs. Aml. Pity indeed; for he's a hopeful young man to look on; but he leads a life—Well—where he has it, Heaven knows; but they say, he pays his club with the best of 'em. I have seen him but once these three months, neighbour, and then the varlet wanted money; but I bid him march, and march he did to some purpose; for in less than an hour back comes my gentleman into the house, walks to and fro in the room, with his wig over his shoulder, his hat on one side, whistling a minuet, and tossing a purse of gold from one hand to t'other, with no more respect (Heaven bless us!) than if it had been an orange. Sirrah, says I, where have you got that? He answers me never a word, but sets his arms akimbo, cocks his saucy hat in my face, turns about upon his ungracious heel, as much as to say kiss—and I've never set eye on him since.

Mrs. Clog. Look you there now; to see what the youth of this age are come to!

Mrs. Aml. See what they will come to, neighbour. Heaven shield, I say; but Dick's upon the gallop. Well, I must bid you good-morrow; I'm going where I doubt I shall meet but a sorry well-come.

Mrs. Clog. To get in some old debt, I'll warrant you?

Mrs. Aml. Neither better nor worse.

Mrs. Clog. From a lady of quality?

Mrs. Aml. No, she's but a scrivener's wife; but she lives as well and pays as ill as the state-liest countess of 'em all. *[Exeunt severally.]*

SCENE II.—The Street before GRIPE's House.

Enter BRASS.

Brass. Well, surely through the world's wide extent, there never appeared so impudent a fellow as my school-fellow Dick.—Pass himself upon the town for a gentleman, drop into all the best company with an easy air, as if his natural element were in the sphere of quality; when the rogue had a kettle-drum to his father, who was hanged for robbing a church, and has a pedlar to his mother, —who carries her shop under her arm! —But here he comes.

Enter DICK AMLET.

Dick. Well, Brass, what news? Hast thou given my letter to Flippanta?

Brass. I'm but just come; I han't knocked at the door yet. But I have a damned piece of news for you.

Dick. As how?

Brass. We must quit this country.

Dick. We'll be hanged first.

Brass. So you will if you stay.

Dick. Why, what's the matter?

Brass. There's a storm a coming.

Dick. From whence?

Brass. From the worst point in the compass, the law.

Dick. The law! why what have I to do with the law?

Brass. Nothing; and therefore it has something to do with you.

Dick. Explain.

Brass. You know you cheated a young fellow at picquet t'other day of the money he had to raise his company.

Dick. Well, what then?

Brass. Why, he's sorry he lost it.

Dick. Who doubts that?

Brass. Ay, but that is not all, he's such a fool to think of complaining on't.

Dick. Then I must be so wise to stop his mouth.

Brass. How?

Dick. Give him a little back; if that won't do, strangle him.

Brass. You are very quick in your methods.

Dick. Men must be so that will despatch business.

Brass. Hark you, colonel, your father died in's bed?

Dick. He might have done, if he had not been a fool.

Brass. Why, he robbed a church.

Dick. Ay, but he forgot to make sure of the sexton.

Brass. Are not you a great rogue?

Dick. Or I should wear worse clothes.

Brass. Hark you, I would advise you to change your life.

Dick. And turn ballad-singer?

Brass. Not so neither.

Dick. What then.

Brass. Why, if you can get this young wench, reform, and live honest.

Dick. That's the way to be starved.

Brass. No, she has money enough to buy you a good place, and pay me into the bargain for helping her to so good a match. You have but this throw left to save you, for you are not ignorant, youngster, that your morals begin to be pretty well known about town; have a care your noble birth and your honourable relations are not discovered too; there needs but that to have you tossed in a blanket, for the entertainment of the first company of ladies you intrude into; and then, like a dutiful son, you may dabble about with your mother, and sell paint: she's old and weak, and wants somebody to carry her goods after her. How like a dog will you look, with a pair of plod shoes, your hair cropped up to your ears, and a bandbox under your arm!

Dick. Why faith, Brass, I think thou art in the right on't; I must fix my affairs quickly, or madam Fortune will be playing some of her bitch-tricks with me: therefore I'll tell thee what we'll do; we'll pursue this old rogue's daughter heartily; we'll cheat his family to purpose, and they shall atone for the rest of mankind.

Brass. Have at her then! I'll about your business presently.

Dick. One kiss—and success attend thee. [*Exit.*]

Brass. A great rogue!—Well, I say nothing: but when I have got the thing into a good posture, he shall sign and seal, or I'll have him tumbled out of the house like a cheese.—Now for Flippanta.

[*Knocks at GRIFE's door.*]

Enter FLIPPANTA.

Flip. Who's that? Brass!

Brass. Flippanta!

Flip. What want you, rogue's face?

Brass. Is your mistress dressed?

Flip. What, already! Is the fellow drunk?

Brass. Why, with respect to her looking-glass, it's almost two.

Flip. What then, fool?

Brass. Why then it's time for the mistress of the house to come down, and look after her family.

Flip. Prithee don't be an owl. Those that go to bed at night may rise in the morning! we that go to bed in the morning rise in the afternoon.

Brass. When does she make her visits then?

Flip. By candle-light; it helps off a muddy complexion; we women hate inquisitive sunshine. But do you know that my lady is going to turn good housewife?

Brass. What, is she going to die?

Flip. Die!

Brass. Why, that's the only way to save money for her family.

Flip. No; but she has thought of a project to save chair-hire.

Brass. As how?

Flip. Why all the company she used to keep abroad, she now intends shall meet at her own house. Your master has advised her to set up a basset-table.

Brass. Nay, if he advised her to 't, it's right; but has she acquainted her husband with it yet?

Flip. What to do? when the company meet, he'll see 'em.

Brass. Nay, that's true, as you say; he'll know it soon enough.

Flip. Well, I must be gone; have you any business with my lady?

Brass. Yes; as ambassador from Araminta, I have a letter for her.

Flip. Give it me.

Brass. Hold!—and as first minister of state to the colonel, I have an affair to communicate to thee.

Flip. What is't?—quick!

Brass. Why—he's in love.

Flip. With what?

Brass. A woman—and her money together.

Flip. Who is she?

Brass. Corinna.

Flip. What would he be at?

Brass. At her, if she's at leisure.

Flip. Which way?

Brass. Honourably. He has ordered me to demand her of thee in marriage.

Flip. Of me!

Brass. Why, when a man of quality has a mind to a city fortune, wouldst have him apply to her father and mother?

Flip. No.

Brass. No; so I think. Men of our end of the town are better bred than to use ceremony. With a long periwig we strike the lady; with a you-know-what we soften the maid; and when the parson has done his job, we open the affair to the family. Will you slip this letter into her Prayer-Book, my little queen? it's a very passionate one. It's sealed with a heart and a dagger; you may see by that what he intends to do with himself.

Flip. Are there any verses in it? if not, I won't touch it.

Brass. Not one word in prose; it's dated in rhyme. [*FLIPPANTA takes the letter.*]

Flip. Well, but have you brought nothing else?

Brass. Gad forgive me, I'm the forgetfullest dog!—I have a letter for you too;—here, 'tis in a purse, but it's in prose; you won't touch it.

Flip. Yes, hang it, it is not good to be too dainty.

Brass. How useful a virtue is humility!—Well, child, we shall have an answer to-morrow, shan't we?

Flip. I can't promise you that; for our young gentlewoman is not so often in my way as she would be. Her father (who is a citizen from the foot to the forehead of him) lets her seldom converse with her mother-in-law and me, for fear she should learn the airs of a woman of quality. But I'll take the first occasion.—See, there's my lady; go in and deliver your letter to her. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.—*A Room in the same.*

Enter CLARISSA, followed by FLIPPANTA and BRASS.

Clar. No messages this morning from anybody, Flippanta? Lard, how dull that is! Oh, there's Brass!—I did not see thee, Brass. What news dost thou bring?

Brass. Only a letter from Araminta, madam.

Clar. Give it me.—Open it for me, Flippanta, I am so lazy to-day. [Sitting down.]

Brass. [Aside to FLIPPANTA.] Be sure now you deliver my master's as carefully as I do this.

Flip. Don't trouble thyself, I'm no novice.

Clar. [To BRASS.] 'Tis well; there needs no answer, since she'll be here so soon.

Brass. Your ladyship has no farther commands then?

Clar. Not at this time, honest Brass.—[Exit

BRASS.] Flippanta!

Flip. Madam.

Clar. My husband's in love.

Flip. In love!

Clar. With Araminta.

Flip. Impossible!

Clar. This letter from her is to give me an account of it.

Flip. Methinks you are not very much alarmed.

Clar. No; thou knowest I'm not much tortured with jealousy.

Flip. Nay, you are much in the right on't, madam, for jealousy's a city passion; 'tis a thing unknown amongst people of quality.

Clar. Fy! a woman must indeed be of a mechanic mould who is either troubled or pleased with anything her husband can do to her. Prithee mention him no more; 'tis the dullest theme.

Flip. 'Tis splenetic indeed. But when once you open your basset-table, I hope that will put him out of your head.

Clar. Alas, Flippanta! I begin to grow weary even of the thoughts of that too.

Flip. How so?

Clar. Why, I have thought on't a day and a night already; and four-and-twenty hours, thou knowest, is enough to make one weary of anything.

Flip. Now, by my conscience, you have more woman in you than all your sex together: you never know what you would have.

Clar. Thou mistakest the thing quite. I always know what I lack, but I am never pleased with what I have. The want of a thing is perplexing enough, but the possession of it is intolerable.

Flip. Well, I don't know what you are made of, but other women would think themselves blest in your case; handsome, witty, loved by everybody, and of so happy a composure to care a fig for nobody. You have no one passion but that of your pleasures; and you have in me a servant devoted to all your desires, let 'em be as extravagant as they will. Yet all this is nothing; you can still be out of humour.

Clar. Alas! I have but too much cause.

Flip. Why, what have you to complain of?

Clar. Alas! I have more subjects for spleen than one. Is it not a most horrible thing that I should be but a scrivener's wife? Come, don't flatter me; don't you think nature designed me for something *plus élevée*?

Flip. Nay, that's certain; but on t'other side, methinks, you ought to be in some measure content, since you live like a woman of quality, though you are none.

Clar. O fy! the very quintessence of it is wanting.

Flip. What's that?

Clar. Why, I dare abuse nobody: I'm afraid to affront people, though I don't like their faces; or to ruin their reputations, though they pique me to it by taking ever so much pains to preserve 'em: I dare not raise a lie of a man, though he neglects to make love to me; nor report a woman to be a fool, though she's handsomer than I am. In short, I dare not so much as bid my footman kick the people out of doors, though they come to ask me for what I owe 'em.

Flip. All this is very hard indeed.

Clar. Ah, Flippanta, the perquisites of quality are of an unspeakable value!

Flip. They are of some use, I must confess; but we must not expect to have everything. You have wit and beauty, and a fool to your husband: come, come, madam, that's a good portion for one.

Clar. Alas! what signifies beauty and wit, when one dares neither jilt the men nor abuse the women? 'Tis a sad thing, Flippanta, when wit's confined; 'tis worse than the rising of the lights. I have been sometimes almost choked with scandal, and durst not cough it up for want of being a countess.

Flip. Poor lady!

Clar. Oh! liberty is a fine thing, Flippanta; it's a great help in conversation to have leave to say what one will. I have seen a woman of quality, who has not had one grain of wit, entertain a whole company the most agreeably in the world, only with her malice. But 'tis in vain to repine; I can't mend my condition till my husband dies; so I'll say no more on't, but think of making the most of the state I am in.

Flip. That's your best way, madam; and in order to it, pray consider how you'll get some ready money to set your basset-table a-going; for that's necessary.

Clar. Thou sayest true; but what trick I shall play my husband to get some I don't know: for my pretence of losing my diamond necklace has put the man into such a passion, I'm afraid he won't hear reason.

Flip. No matter; he begins to think 'tis lost in earnest: so I fancy you may venture to sell it, and raise money that way.

Clar. That can't be, for he has left odious notes with all the goldsmiths in town.

Flip. Well, we must pawn it then.

Clar. I'm quite tired with dealing with those pawnbrokers.

Flip. [Aside.] I'm afraid you'll continue the trade a great while, for all that.

Enter JESSAMIN.

Jes. Madam, there's the woman below that sells paint and patches, iron-bodice, false teeth, and all sorts of things to the ladies; I can't think of her name. [Exit.]

Flip. 'Tis Mrs. Amlet; she wants money.

Clar. Well, I han't enough for myself, it's an unreasonable thing she should think I have any for her.

Flip. She's a troublesome jade.

Clar. So are all people that come a-dunning.

Flip. What will you do with her?

Clar. I have just now thought on't. She's very rich, that woman is, Flippanta; I'll borrow some money of her.

Flip. Borrow! sure you jest, madam.

Clar. No, I'm in earnest; I give thee commission to do it for me.

Flip. Me!

Clar. Why dost thou stare, and look so ungainly? don't I speak to be understood?

Flip. Yes, I understand you well enough; but Mrs. Amlet—

Clar. But Mrs. Amlet must lend me some money; where shall I have any to pay her else?

Flip. That's true; I never thought of that truly. But here she is.

Enter Mrs. AMLET.

Clar. How d'you do? how d'you do, Mrs. Amlet; I han't seen you these thousand years, and yet I believe I'm down in your books.

Mrs. Aml. Oh, madam, I don't come for that, alack!

Flip. Good-morrow, Mrs. Amlet.

Mrs. Aml. Good-morrow, Mrs. Flippanta.

Clar. How much am I indebted to you, Mrs. Amlet?

Mrs. Aml. Nay, if your ladyship desires to see your bill, I believe I may have it about me.—There, madam, if it ben't too much fatigue to you to look it over.

Clar. Let me see it, for I hate to be in debt—*[Aside]*—where I am obliged to pay.—*[Reads.]* Imprimis, *For bolstering out the Countess of Crump's left hip*—Oh, fy! this does not belong to me.

Mrs. Aml. I beg your ladyship's pardon. I mistook, indeed; 'tis a countess's bill I have writ out to little purpose. I furnished her two years ago with three pair of hips, and am not paid for 'em yet.—But some are better customers than some.—There's your ladyship's bill, madam.

Clar. *[Reads.]* *For the idea of a new-invented commode*.—Ay, this may be mine, but 'tis of a preposterous length. Do you think I can waste time to read every article, Mrs. Amlet? I'd as lief read a sermon.

Mrs. Aml. Alack-a-day, there's no need of fatiguing yourself at that rate; cast an eye only, if your honour pleases, upon the sum total.

Clar. Total; fifty-six pound—and odd things.

Flip. But six-and-fifty pound!

Mrs. Aml. Nay, another body would have made it twice as much; but there's a blessing goes along with a moderate profit.

Clar. Flippanta, go to my cashier, let him give you six-and-fifty pound. Make haste: don't you hear me? six-and-fifty pound. Is it so difficult to be comprehended?

Flip. No, madam, I—I comprehend six-and-fifty pound, but—

Clar. But go and fetch it then.

Flip. *[Aside.]* What she means I don't know; but I shall, I suppose, before I bring her the money.

[Exit.]

Clar. *[Setting her hair in a pocket-glass.]* The trade you follow gives you a great deal of trouble, Mrs. Amlet?

Mrs. Aml. Alack-a-day, a world of pain, madam, and yet there's small profit, as your honour sees by your bill.

Clar. Poor woman! Sometimes you have great losses, Mrs. Amlet?

Mrs. Aml. I have two thousand pounds owing me, of which I shall never get ten shillings.

Clar. Poor woman! You have a great charge of children, Mrs. Amlet?

Mrs. Aml. Only one wicked rogue, madam, who, I think, will break my heart.

Clar. Poor woman!

Mrs. Aml. He'll be hanged, madam—that will be the end of him. Where he gets it, Heaven knows; but he's always shaking his heels with the ladies, and his elbows with the lords. He's as fine as a prince, and as gim as the best of them; but the ungracious rogue tells all he comes near that his mother is dead, and I am but his nurse.

Clar. Poor woman!

Mrs. Aml. Alas, madam, he's like the rest of the world; everybody's for appearing to be more than they are, and that ruins all.

Clar. Well, Mrs. Amlet, you'll excuse me, I have a little business, Flippanta will bring you your money presently. Adieu, Mrs. Amlet!

Mrs. Aml. I return your honour many thanks. —*[Exit CLARISSA.]* Ah, there's my good lady, not so much as read her bill. If the rest were like her, I should soon have money enough to go as fine as Dick himself.

Enter DICK AMLET.

Dick. Sure Flippanta must have given my letter by this time; I long to know how it has been received.

Mrs. Aml. Misericorde! what do I see!

Dick. *[Aside.]* Fiends and hags—the witch my mother!

Mrs. Aml. Nay, 'tis he; ah, my poor Dick, what art thou doing here?

Dick. *[Aside.]* What a misfortune!

Mrs. Aml. Good Lard! how thou art bravely decked. But it's all one, I am thy mother still; and though thou art a wicked child, nature will speak, I love thee still, ah, Dick! my poor Dick!

[Embracing him.]

Dick. Blood and thunder! will you ruin me?

[Breaking from her.]

Mrs. Aml. Ah, the blasphemous rogue, how he swears!

Dick. You destroy all my hopes.

Mrs. Aml. Will your mother's kiss destroy you, varlet? Thou art an ungracious bird; kneel down, and ask me blessing, sirrah.

Dick. Death and furies!

Mrs. Aml. Ah, he's a proper young man; see what a shape he has! ah, poor child!

[Running to embrace him, he still avoiding her.]

Dick. Oons, keep off! the woman's mad. If anybody comes, my fortune's lost.

Mrs. Aml. What fortune, ha? speak, graceless! Ah Dick, thou'lt be hanged, Dick!

Dick. Good dear mother now, don't call me Dick here.

Mrs. Aml. Not call thee Dick! is it not thy name? What shall I call thee? Mr. Amlet? ha! Art not thou a presumptuous rascal? Hark you, sirrah, I hear of your tricks; you disown me for

your mother, and say I am but your nurse. Is not this true?

Dick. No, I love you; I respect you;—[*Taking her hand.*] I am all duty. But if you discover me here, you ruin the fairest prospect that man ever had.

Mrs. Aml. What prospect? ha! Come, this is a lie now.

Dick. No, my honoured parent; what I say is true, I'm about a great fortune. I'll bring you home a daughter-in-law, in a coach and six horses, if you'll but be quiet: I can't tell you more now.

Mrs. Aml. Is it possible!

Dick. 'Tis true, by Jupiter!

Mrs. Aml. My dear lad!—

Dick. For heaven's sake!—

Mrs. Aml. But tell me, Dick—

Dick. I'll follow you home in a moment, and tell you all.

Mrs. Aml. What a shape is there!

Dick. Pray mother go.

Mrs. Aml. I must receive some money here first, which shall go for thy wedding-dinner.

Dick. Here's somebody coming.—[*Aside.*] 'Sdeath, she'll betray me!

[*He makes signs to his mother.*]

Re-enter FLIPPANTA.

Dick. Good-morrow, dear Flippanta: how do all the ladies within?

Flip. At your service, colonel; as far at least as my interest goes.

Mrs. Aml. Colonel!—Law you now, how Dick's respected!

[*Aside.*]

Dick. Waiting for thee, Flippanta, I was making acquaintance with this old gentlewoman here.

Mrs. Aml. The pretty lad! he's as impudent as a page.

[*Aside.*]

Dick. Who is this good woman, Flippanta?

Flip. A gin of all trades; an old daggling cheat, that hobbles about from house to house to bubble the ladies of their money. I have a small business of yours in my pocket, colonel.

Dick. An answer to my letter?

Flip. So quick indeed! No, it's your letter itself.

Dick. Hast thou not given it then yet?

Flip. I han't had an opportunity; but 'twon't be long first. Won't you go in and see my lady?

Dick. Yes, I'll go make her a short visit. But, dear Flippanta, don't forget: my life and fortune are in your hands.

Flip. Ne'er fear, I'll take care of 'em.

Mrs. Aml. How he traps 'em! let Dick alone.

[*Aside.*]

Dick. [To Mrs. AMLET.] Your servant, good madam.

Mrs. Aml. Your honour's most devoted.—[*Exit DICK AMLET.*] A pretty, civil, well-bred gentleman this, Mrs. Flippanta. Pray whom may he be?

Flip. A man of great note; Colonel Shapely.

Mrs. Aml. Is it possible! I have heard much of him indeed, but never saw him before. One may see quality in every limb of him: he's a fine man truly.

Flip. I think you are in love with him, Mrs. Amlet.

Mrs. Aml. Alas, those days are done with me, but if I were as fair as I was once, and had as much money as some folks, Colonel Shapely should not catch cold for want of a bedfellow. I love your men of rank, they have something in their air does so distinguish 'em from the rascality.

Flip. People of quality are fine things indeed, Mrs. Amlet, if they had but a little more money; but for want of that, they are forced to do things their great souls are ashamed of. For example—here's my lady—she owes you but six-and-fifty pounds—

Mrs. Aml. Well!

Flip. Well, and she has it not by her to pay you.

Mrs. Aml. How can that be?

Flip. I don't know; her cash-keeper's out of humour, he says he has no money.

Mrs. Aml. What a presumptuous piece of vermin is a cash-keeper! Tell his lady he has no money!—Now, Mrs. Flippanta, you may see his bags are full, by his being so saucy.

Flip. If they are, there's no help for't; he'll do what he pleases, till he comes to make up his yearly accounts.

Mrs. Aml. But madam plays sometimes, so when she has good fortune, she may pay me out of her winnings.

Flip. Oh, ne'er think of that, Mrs. Amlet; if she had won a thousand pounds, she'd rather die in a jail than pay off a farthing with it. Play-money, Mrs. Amlet, amongst people of quality, is a sacred thing, and not to be profaned. The deuse!—'tis consecrated to their pleasures, 'twould be sacrilege to pay their debts with it.

Mrs. Aml. Why what shall we do then? for I han't one penny to buy bread.

Flip. I'll tell you—it just now comes in my head: I know my lady has a little occasion for money at this time; so—if you lend her—a hundred pound—do you see, then she may pay you your six-and-fifty out of it.

Mrs. Aml. Sure, Mrs. Flippanta, you think to make a fool of me!

Flip. No, the devil fetch me if I do.—You shall have a diamond necklace in pawn.

Mrs. Aml. O ho, a pawn! That's another case. And when must she have this money?

Flip. In a quarter of an hour.

Mrs. Aml. Say no more. Bring the necklace to my house, it shall be ready for you.

Flip. I'll be with you in a moment.

Mrs. Aml. Adieu, Mrs. Flippanta.

Flip. Adieu, Mrs. Amlet.—[*Exit Mrs. AMLET.*]

So—this ready money will make us all happy. This spring will set our basset going, and that's a wheel will turn twenty others. My lady's young and handsome; she'll have a dozen intrigues upon her hands before she has been twice at her prayers. So much the better; the more the grist, the richer the miller. Sure never wench got into so hopeful a place! Here's a fortune to be sold, a mistress to be debauched, and a master to be ruined. If I don't feather my nest, and get a good husband, I deserve to die, both a maid and a beggar. [*Exit.*]

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A Room in GRIPPE'S House.**Enter CLARISSA and DICK AMLET.*

Clar. What in the name of dulness is the matter with you, colonel? You are as studious as a cracked chemist.

Dick. My head, madam, is full of your husband.

Clar. The worst furniture for a head in the universe.

Dick. I am thinking of his passion for your friend Araminta.

Clar. Passion!—dear colonel, give it a less violent name.

Enter BRASS.

Dick. Well, sir, what want you?

Brass. [*Aside to DICK AMLET.*] The affair I told you of goes ill.—There's an action out.

Dick. The devil there is!

Clar. What news brings Brass?

Dick. Before Gad I can't tell, madam; the dog will never speak out.—[*To BRASS.*] My lord what d'ye call him waits for me at my lodging: is not that it?

Brass. Yes, sir.

Dick. Madam, I ask your pardon.

Clar. Your servant, sir.—[*Exeunt DICK AMLET and BRASS.*] Jessamin! [*She sits down.*]

Enter JESSAMIN.

Jes. Madam!

Clar. Where's Corinna? Call her to me, if her father han't locked her up; I want her company.

Jes. Madam, her guitar-master is with her.

[Exit.]

Clar. Psha! she's taken up with her impertinent guitar man. Flippanta stays an age with that old fool Mrs. Amlet. And Araminta, before she can come abroad, is so long a placing her coquette-patch, that I must be a year without company. How insupportable is a moment's uneasiness to a woman of spirit and pleasure!

Enter FLIPPANTA.

Oh, art thou come at last? Prithce, Flippanta, learn to move a little quicker, thou knowest how impatient I am.

Flip. Yes, when you expect money. If you had sent me to buy a prayer-book, you'd have thought I had flown.

Clar. Well, hast thou brought me any, after all?

Flip. Yes, I have brought some. There—[*Giving her a purse.*] The old hag has struck off her bill, the rest is in that purse.

Clar. 'Tis well; but take care, Flippanta, my husband don't suspect anything of this; 'twould vex him, and I don't love to make him uneasy: so I would spare him these little sort of troubles, by keeping 'em from his knowledge.

Flip. See the tenderness she has for him! and yet he's always complaining of you.

Clar. 'Tis the nature of 'em, Flippanta; a husband is a growling animal.

Flip. How exactly you define 'em!

Clar. I know 'em, Flippanta; though I confess my poor wretch diverts me sometimes with his ill humours. I wish he would quarrel with me to-day a little, to pass away the time, for I find myself in a violent spleen.

Flip. Why, if you please to drop yourself in his way, six to four but he scolds one rubbers with you.

Clar. Ay, but thou knowest he's as uncertain as the wind, and if instead of quarrelling with me, he should chance to be fond, he'd make me as sick as a dog.

Flip. If he's kind, you must provoke him; if he kisses you, spit in his face.

Clar. Alas! when men are in the kissing fit, (like lapdogs,) they take that for a favour.

Flip. Nay, then I don't know what you'll do with him.

Clar. I'll e'en do nothing at all with him—Flippanta. [*Evening.*]

Flip. Madam!

Clar. My hoods and scarf, and a coach to the door.

Flip. Why, whither are you going?

Clar. I can't tell yet, but I would go spend some money, since I have it.

Flip. Why, you want nothing that I know of.

Clar. How awkward an objection now is that! as if a woman of education bought things because she wanted 'em. Quality always distinguishes itself, and therefore as the mechanic people buy things, because they have occasion for 'em, you see women of rank always buy things, because they have not occasion for 'em. Now there, Flippanta, you see the difference between a woman that has breeding, and one that has none. O ho, here's Araminta come at last.

Enter ARAMINTA.

Lard, what a tedious while you have let me expect you! I was afraid you were not well; how d'ye do to-day?

Aram. As well as a woman can do, that has not slept all night.

Flip. Methinks, madam, you are pretty well awake, however.

Aram. Oh, 'tis not a little thing will make a woman of my vigour look drowsy.

Clar. But prithce what was't disturbed you?

Aram. Not your husband, don't trouble yourself; at least, I am not in love with him yet.

Clar. Well remembered, I had quite forgot that matter. I wish you much joy, you have made a noble conquest indeed.

Aram. But now I have subdued the country, pray is it worth my keeping? You know the ground, you have tried it.

Clar. A barren soil, Heaven can tell.

Aram. Yet if it were well cultivated, it would produce something to my knowledge. Do you know it is in my power to ruin this poor thing of yours? His whole estate is at my service.

Flip. Cods-fish! strike him, madam, and let my

lady go your halves. There's no sin in plundering a husband, so his wife has share of the booty.

Aram. Whenever she gives me her orders, I shall be very ready to obey 'em.

Clar. Why, as odd a thing as such a project may seem, Araminta, I believe I shall have a little serious discourse with you about it. But, prithee, tell me how you have passed the night? for I am sure your mind has been roving upon some pretty thing or other.

Aram. Why, I have been studying all the ways my brain could produce to plague my husband.

Clar. No wonder indeed you look so fresh this morning, after the satisfaction of such pleasing ideas all night.

Aram. Why, can a woman do less than study mischief, when she has tumbled and tossed herself into a burning fever for want of sleep, and sees a fellow lie snoring by her, stock-still, in a fine breathing sweat?

Clar. Now see the difference of women's tempers! If my dear would make but one nap of his whole life, and only waken to make his will, I should be the happiest wife in the universe. But we'll discourse more of these matters as we go, for I must take a tour among the shops.

Aram. I have a coach waits at the door, we'll talk of 'em as we rattle along.

Clar. The best place in nature; for you know a hackney-coach is a natural enemy to a husband.

[*Exeunt CLARISSA and ARAMINTA.*]

Flip. What a pretty little pair of amiable persons are there gone to hold a council of war together! Poor birds! What would they do with their time, if the plaguing their husbands did not help 'em to employment! Well, if idleness be the root of all evil, then matrimony's good for something, for it sets many a poor woman to work. But here comes Miss. I hope I shall help her into the holy state too ere long. And when she's once there, if she don't play her part as well as the best of 'em, I'm mistaken. Han't I lost the letter I'm to give her?—No, here 'tis; so, now we shall see how pure nature will work with her, for art she knows none yet.

[*Enter CORINNA.*]

Cor. What does my mother-in-law want with me, Flippanta? They tell me she was asking for me.

Flip. She's just gone out, so I suppose 'twas no great business.

Cor. Then I'll go into my chamber again.

Flip. Nay, hold a little if you please. I have some business with you myself of more concern than what she had to say to you.

Cor. Make haste then, for you know my father won't let me keep you company; he says you'll spoil me.

Flip. I spoil you! He's an unworthy man to give you such ill impressions of a woman of my honour.

Cor. Nay, never take it to heart, Flippanta, for I don't believe a word he says. But he does so plague me with his continual scolding, I'm almost weary of my life.

Flip. Why, what is't he finds fault with?

Cor. Nay, I don't know, for I never mind him; when he has babbled for two hours together, methinks I have heard a mill going, that's all. It

does not at all change my opinion, Flippanta, it only makes my head ache.

Flip. Nay, if you can bear it so, you are not to be pitied so much as I thought.

Cor. Not pitied! Why is it not a miserable thing for such a young creature as I am should be kept in perpetual solitude, with no other company but a parcel of old fumbling masters, to teach me geography, arithmetic, philosophy, and a thousand useless things? Fine entertainment, indeed, for a young maid at sixteen? Methinks one's time might be better employed.

Flip. Those things will improve your wit.

Cor. Fiddle, faddle! han't I wit enough already? My mother-in-law has learned none of this trumpery, and is not she as happy as the day is long?

Flip. Then you envy her I find?

Cor. And well I may. Does she not do what she has a mind to, in spite of her husband's teeth?

Flip. [*Aside.*] Look you there now! If she has not already conceived that as the supreme blessing of life!

Cor. I'll tell you what, Flippanta; if my mother-in-law would but stand by me a little, and encourage me, and let me keep her company, I'd rebel against my father to-morrow, and throw all my books in the fire. Why, he can't touch a groat of my portion; do you know that, Flippanta!

Flip. [*Aside.*] So—I shall spoil her! Pray Heaven the girl don't debauch me!

Cor. Look you: in short, he may think what he pleases, he may think himself wise; but thoughts are free, and I may think in my turn. I'm but a girl, 'tis true, and a fool too, if you'll believe him; but let him know, a foolish girl may make a wise man's heart ache; so he had as good be quiet.—Now it's out.

Flip. Very well, I love to see a young woman have spirit, it's a sign she'll come to something.

Cor. Ah, Flippanta! if you would but encourage me, you'd find me quite another thing. I'm a devilish girl in the bottom; I wish you'd but let me make one amongst you.

Flip. That never can be till you are married. Come, examine your strength a little. Do you think you durst venture upon a husband?

Cor. A husband! Why, a—if you would but encourage me. Come, Flippanta, be a true friend now. I'll give you advice when I have got a little more experience. Do you in your very conscience and soul think I am old enough to be married?

Flip. Old enough! why, you are sixteen, are you not?

Cor. Sixteen! I am sixteen, two months, and odd days, woman. I keep an exact account.

Flip. The deuce you are!

Cor. Why, do you then truly and sincerely think I am old enough?

Flip. I do upon my faith, child.

Cor. Why, then, to deal as fairly with you, Flippanta, as you do with me, I have thought so any time these three years.

Flip. Now I find you have more wit than ever I thought you had; and to show you what an opinion I have of your discretion, I'll show you a thing I thought to have thrown in the fire.

Cor. What is it, for Jupiter's sake?

Flip. Something will make your heart chuck within you.

Cor. My dear Flippanta!

Flip. What do you think it is?

Cor. I don't know, nor I don't care, but I'm mad to have it.

Flip. It's a four-cornered thing.

Cor. What, like a cardinal's cap?

Flip. No, 'tis worth a whole conclave of 'em. How do you like it? *[Showing the letter.]*

Cor. O Lard, a letter! Is there ever a token in it?

Flip. Yes, and a precious one too. There's a handsome young gentleman's heart.

Cor. A handsome young gentleman's heart!—*[Aside.]* Nay, then, it's time to look grave.

Flip. There.

Cor. I shan't touch it.

Flip. What's the matter now?

Cor. I shan't receive it.

Flip. Sure you jest.

Cor. You'll find I don't. I understand myself better than to take letters when I don't know who they are from.

Flip. I'm afraid I commended your wit too soon.

Cor. 'Tis all one, I shan't touch it, unless I know who it comes from.

Flip. Heyday! open it and you'll see.

Cor. Indeed I shall not.

Flip. Well—then I must return it where I had it.

Cor. That won't serve your turn, madam. My father must have an account of this.

Flip. Sure you are not in earnest?

Cor. You'll find I am.

Flip. So, here's fine work! This 'tis to deal with girls before they come to know the distinction of sexes!

Cor. Confess who you had it from, and perhaps, for this once, I mayn't tell my father.

Flip. Why then since it must out, 'twas the colonel. But why are you so scrupulous, madam?

Cor. Because if it had come from anybody else—I would not have given a farthing for it.

[Twitching it eagerly out of her hand.]

Flip. Ah, my dear little rogue!—*[Kissing her.]* You frightened me out of my wits.

Cor. Let me read it! let me read it! let me read it! let me read it! I say.—Um, um, um.—*Cupid's*,—um, um, um,—*darts*,—um, um, um,—*beauty*,—um,—*charms*,—um, um, um,—*angel*,—um,—*goddess*,—um.—*[Kissing the letter.]* um, um, um,—*truest lover*,—um, um,—*eternal constancy*,—um, um, um,—*cruel*,—um, um, um,—*racks*,—um, um,—*tortures*,—um, um,—*fifty daggers*,—um, um,—*bleeding heart*,—um, um,—*dead man*.—Very well, a mighty civil letter I promise you; not one smutty word in it: I'll go lock it up in my comb-box.

Flip. Well—but what does he say to you?

Cor. Not a word of news, Flippanta; 'tis all about business.

Flip. Does he not tell you he's in love with you?

Cor. Ay, but he told me that before.

Flip. How so? he never spoke to you.

Cor. He sent me word by his eyes.

Flip. Did he so? mighty well! I thought you had been to learn that language.

Cor. Oh, but you thought wrong, Flippanta. What, because I don't go a-visiting, and see the world, you think I know nothing! But you should consider, Flippanta, that the more one's alone the more one thinks; and 'tis thinking that improves a girl, I'll have you to know, when I was younger than I am now, by more than I'll boast

of, I thought of things would have made you stare again.

Flip. Well, since you are so well versed in your business, I suppose I need not inform you, that if you don't write your gallant an answer—he'll die.

Cor. Nay, now, Flippanta, I confess you tell me something I did not know before. Do you speak in serious sadness? are men given to die if their mistresses are sour to 'em?

Flip. Um—I can't say they all die.—No, I can't say they all do; but truly, I believe it would go very hard with the colonel.

Cor. Lard, I would not have my hands in blood for thousands; and therefore, Flippanta—if you'll encourage me—

Flip. O by all means an answer.

Cor. Well, since you say it then, I'll e'en in and do it, though I protest to you (lest you should think me too forward now) he's the only man that wears a beard I'd ink my fingers for.—*[Aside.]* Maybe if I marry him, in a year or two's time I mayn't be so nice. *[Exit.]*

Flip. Now Heaven give him joy; he's like to have a rare wife o' thee! But where there's money, a man has a plaster to his sore. They have a blessed time on't, who marry for love. See!—here comes an example—Araminta's dread lord.

Enter MONEYTRAP.

Mon. Ah, Flippanta! How do you do, good Flippanta? how do you do?

Flip. Thank you, sir, well, at your service.

Mon. And how does the good family, your master, and your fair mistress? Are they at home?

Flip. Neither of 'em; my master has been gone out these two hours, and my lady is just gone with your wife.

Mon. Well, I won't say I have lost my labour, however, as long as I have met with you Flippanta. For I have wished a great while for an opportunity to talk with you a little. You won't take it amiss, if I should ask you a few questions?

Flip. Provided you leave me to my liberty in my answers.—*[Aside.]* What's this cotquean going to pry into now!

Mon. Prithee, good, Flippanta, how do your master and mistress live together?

Flip. Live! why—like man and wife; generally out of humour, quarrel often, seldom agree, complain of one another; and perhaps have both reason. In short, 'tis much as 'tis at your house.

Mon. Good luck! But whose side are you generally of?

Flip. Oh, the right side always, my lady's. And if you'll have me give you my opinion of these matters, sir, I do not think a husband can ever be in the right.

Mon. Ha!

Flip. Little peaking, creeping, sneaking, stingy, covetous, cowardly, dirty, cuckoldly things.

Mon. Ha!

Flip. Fit for nothing but tailors and dry-nurses.

Mon. Ha!

Flip. A dog in a manger, snarling and biting, to starve gentlemen with good stomachs.

Mon. Ha!

Flip. A sentry upon pleasure, set to be a plague upon lovers, and damn poor women before their time.

Mon. A husband is indeed—

Flip. Sir, I say, he is nothing.—A beetle without wings, a windmill without sails, a ship in a calm.

Mon. Ha !

Flip. A bag without money—an empty bottle—dead small beer.

Mon. Ha !

Flip. A quack without drugs.

Mon. Ha !

Flip. A lawyer without knavery.

Mon. Ha !

Flip. A courtier without flattery.

Mon. Ha !

Flip. A king without an army—or a people with one. Have I drawn him, sir ?

Mon. Why truly, Flippanta, I can't deny but there are some general lines of resemblance. But you know there may be exceptions.

Flip. Hark you, sir, shall I deal plainly with you ? Had I got a husband, I would put him in mind that he was married as well as I. [*Sings.*

*For were I the thing call'd a wife,
And my fool grew too fond of his power,
He should look like an ass all his life,
For a prank that I'd play in an hour.*

Tol lol, la ra, tol tol, &c.

Do you observe that, sir ?

Mon. I do : and think you would be in the right on't. But, prithee, why dost not give this advice to thy mistress ?

Flip. For fear it should go round to your wife, sir, for you know they are playfellows.

Mon. Oh, there's no danger of my wife ; she knows I'm none of those husbands.

Flip. Are you sure she knows that, sir ?

Mon. I'm sure she ought to know it, Flippanta, for really I have but four faults in the world.

Flip. And, pray, what may they be ?

Mon. Why, I'm a little slovenly, I shift but once a week.

Flip. Fough !

Mon. I am sometimes out of humour.

Flip. Provoking !

Mon. I don't give her so much money as she'd have.

Flip. Insolent !

Mon. And a—perhaps I mayn't be quite so young as I was.

Flip. The devil !

Mon. Oh, but then consider how 'tis on her side, Flippanta. She ruins me with washing, is always out of humour, ever wanting money, and will never be older.

Flip. That last article, I must confess, is a little hard upon you.

Mon. Ah, Flippanta ! didst thou but know the daily provocations I have, thou'dst be the first to excuse my faults. But now I think on't—thou art none of my friend, thou dost not love me at all ; no, not at all.

Flip. And whither is this little reproach going to lead us now ?

Mon. You have power over your fair mistress, Flippanta.

Flip. Sir !

Mon. But what then ? you hate me.

Flip. I understand you not.

Mon. There's not a moment's trouble her naughty husband gives her but I feel it too.

Flip. I don't know what you mean.

Mon. If she did but know what part I take in her sufferings—

Flip. Mighty obscure !

Mon. Well, I'll say no more : but—

Flip. All Hebrew !

Mon. If thou wouldst but tell her on't.

Flip. Still darker and darker !

Mon. I should not be ungrateful.

Flip. Ah, now I begin to understand you.

Mon. Flippanta—there's my purse.

Flip. Say no more ; now you explain, indeed—you are in love ?

Mon. Bitterly—and I do swear by all the gods—

Flip. Hold !—spare 'em for another time, you stand in no need of 'em now. A usurer that parts with his purse, gives sufficient proof of his sincerity.

Mon. I hate my wife, Flippanta.

Flip. That we'll take upon your bare word.

Mon. She's the devil, Flippanta.

Flip. You like your neighbour's better ?

Mon. Oh !—an angel !

Flip. What pity it is the law don't allow trucking !

Mon. If it did, Flippanta !

Flip. But since it don't, sir—keep the reins upon your passion : don't let your flame rage too high, lest my lady should be cruel, and it should dry you up to a mummy.

Mon. 'Tis impossible she can be so barbarous to let me die. Alas, Flippanta ! a very small matter would save my life.

Flip. Then y'are dead—for we women never grant anything to a man who will be satisfied with a little.

Mon. Dear Flippanta, that was only my modesty ; but since you'll have it out—I am a very dragon : and so your lady'll find—if ever she thinks fit to be—Now I hope you'll stand my friend.

Flip. Well, sir, as far as my credit goes, it shall be employed in your service.

Mon. My best Flippanta !—Tell her—I'm all hers—tell her—my body's hers—tell her—my soul's hers—and tell her—my estate's hers. Lard have mercy upon me, how I'm in love !

Flip. Poor man ! what a sweat he's in ! But hark—I hear my master ; for heaven's sake compose yourself a little, you are in such a fit, o'my conscience he'll smell you out.

Mon. Ah dear ! I'm in such an emotion, I dare not be seen ; put me in this closet for a moment.

Flip. Closet, man ! it's too little, your love would stifle you. Go air yourself in the garden a little, you have need on't i'faith.—[*She puts him out.*] A rare adventure, by my troth ! This will be curious news to the wives. Fortune has now put their husbands into their hands, and I think they are too sharp to neglect its favours.

Enter GRIPE.

Gripe. Oh, here's the right hand ; the rest of the body can't be far off.—Where's my wife, husband ?

Flip. An admirable question !—Why, she's gone abroad, sir.

Gripe. Abroad, abroad, abroad already ! Why, she uses to be stewing in her bed three hours after this time, as late as 'tis. What makes her gadding so soon ?

Flip. Business, I suppose.

Gripe. Business! she has a pretty head for business truly. O ho, let her change her way of living, or I'll make her change a light heart for a heavy one.

Flip. And why would you have her change her way of living, sir? You see it agrees with her. She never looked better in her life.

Gripe. Don't tell me of her looks, I have done with her looks long since. But I'll make her change her life, or—

Flip. Indeed, sir, you won't.

Gripe. Why, what shall hinder me, Insolence?

Flip. That which hinders most husbands—contradiction.

Gripe. Suppose I resolve I won't be contradicted?

Flip. Suppose she resolves you shall?

Gripe. A wife's resolution is not good by law.

Flip. Nor a husband's by custom.

Gripe. I tell thee, I will not bear it.

Flip. I tell you, sir, you will bear it.

Gripe. Oons! I have borne it three years already.

Flip. By that you see 'tis but giving your mind to it.

Gripe. My mind to it! Death and the devil! My mind to it!

Flip. Look ye, sir, you may swear and damn, and call the furies to assist you; but till you apply the remedy to the right place, you'll never cure the disease. You fancy you have got an extravagant wife, is't not so?

Gripe. Prithee change me that word fancy, and it is so.

Flip. Why there's it. Men are strangely troubled with the vapours of late. You'll wonder now, if I tell you, you have the most reasonable wife in town: and that all the disorders you think you see in her, are only here, here, here, in your own head.

[Thumping his forehead.]

Gripe. She is then, in thy opinion, a reasonable woman?

Flip. By my faith I think so.

Gripe. I shall run mad!—Name me an extravagance in the world she is not guilty of.

Flip. Name me an extravagance in the world she is guilty of.

Gripe. Come then: does not she put the whole house in disorder?

Flip. Not that I know of, for she never comes into it but to sleep.

Gripe. 'Tis very well: does she employ any one moment of her life in the government of her family?

Flip. She is so submissive a wife she leaves it entirely to you.

Gripe. Admirable! Does she not spend more money in coach-hire, and chair-hire, than would maintain six children?

Flip. She's too nice of your credit to be seen daggling in the streets.

Gripe. Good! Do I set eye on her sometimes in a week together?

Flip. That, sir, is because you are never stirring at the same time; you keep odd hours; you are always going to bed when she's rising, and rising just when she's coming to bed.

Gripe. Yes truly, night into day, and day into night, bawdy-house play, that's her trade! But these are trifles: has she not lost her diamond necklace? Answer me to that, Trapes.

Flip. Yes; and has sent as many tears after it as if it had been her husband.

Gripe. Ah!—the pox take her! but enough. 'Tis resolved, and I will put a stop to the course of her life, or I will put a stop to the course of her blood, and so she shall know the first time I meet with her.—[*Aside.*] Which though we are man and wife, and lie under one roof, 'tis very possible may not be this fortnight. [Exit.]

Flip. Nay, thou hast a blessed time on't, that must be confessed. What a miserable devil is a husband! Insupportable to himself, and a plague to everything about them. Their wives do by them as children do by dogs, tease and provoke 'em, till they make 'em so cursed, they snarl and bite at everything that comes in their reach. This wretch here is grown perverse to that degree, he's for his wife's keeping home, and making hell of his house, so he may be the devil in it, to torment her. How niggardly soever he is, of all things he possesses, he is willing to purchase her misery, at the expense of his own peace. But he'd as good be still, for he'll miss of his aim. If I know her (which I think I do) she'll set his blood in such a ferment, it shall bubble out at every pore of him; whilst hers is so quiet in her veins, her pulse shall go like a pendulum. [Exit.]

ACT III.

SCENE I.—A Room in Mrs. AMLET'S House.

Enter DICK AMLET.

Dick. Where's this old woman?—A-hey! What the devil, nobody at home! Ha! her strong-box! and the key in't! 'tis so. Now Fortune be my friend. What the deuse!—not a penny of money in cash!—nor a chequer note!—nor a bank bill!—[*Searches the strong box.*] Nor a crooked stick! nor a—mum!—here's something.—A diamond necklace, by all the gods!—Oons, the old woman!—Zest!

[Claps the necklace in his pocket, then runs and asks her blessing.]

Enter Mrs. AMLET.

Pray mother, pray to, &c.

Mrs. Am. Is it possible!—Dick upon his humble knee! Ah my dear child!—May Heaven be good unto thee.

Dick. I'm come, my dear mother, to pay my duty to you, and to ask your consent to—

Mrs. Am. What a shape is there!

Dick. To ask your consent, I say, to marry a great fortune; for what is riches in this world without a blessing? and how can there be a blessing without respect and duty to parents?

Mrs. Am. What a nose he has!

Dick. And therefore it being the duty of every

good child not to dispose of himself in marriage, without the—

Mrs. Aml. Now the Lord love thee !—*[Kissing him.]* for thou art a goodly young man. Well, Dick,—and how goes it with the lady? Are her eyes open to thy charms? does she see what's for her own good? is she sensible of the blessings thou hast in store for her? ha! is all sure? hast thou broke a piece of money with her? Speak, bird, do: don't be modest and hide thy love from thy mother, for I'm an indulgent parent.

Dick. Nothing under heaven can prevent my good fortune but its being discovered I am your son—

Mrs. Aml. Then thou art still ashamed of thy natural mother—graceless! why, I'm no whore, sirrah.

Dick. I know you are not.—A whore! bless us all!

Mrs. Aml. No; my reputation's as good as the best of 'em; and though I'm old, I'm chaste, you rascal you!

Dick. Lord, that is not the thing we talk of, mother; but—

Mrs. Aml. I think, as the world goes, they may be proud of marrying their daughter into a virtuous family.

Dick. Oons! Virtue is not the case—

Mrs. Aml. Where she may have a good example before her eyes.

Dick. O Lord! O Lord! O Lord!

Mrs. Aml. I'm a woman that don't so much as encourage an incontinent look towards me.

Dick. I tell you, 'sdeath, I tell you—

Mrs. Aml. If a man should make an uncivil motion to me, I'd spit in his lascivious face: and all this you may tell 'em, sirrah.

Dick. Death and furies! the woman's out of her—

Mrs. Aml. Don't you swear, you rascal you, don't you swear; we shall have thee damned at last, and then I shall be disgraced.

Dick. Why then in cool blood hear me speak to you. I tell you it's a city fortune I'm about, she cares not a fig for your virtue, she'll hear of nothing but quality. She has quarrelled with one of her friends for having a better complexion, and is resolved she'll marry, to take place of her.

Mrs. Aml. What a cherry-lip is there!

Dick. Therefore, good dear mother now, have a care and don't discover me; for if you do, all's lost.

Mrs. Aml. Dear, dear, how thy fair bride will be delighted! Go, get thee gone, go! Go fetch her home! go fetch her home! I'll give her a sack-posset, and a pillow of down she shall lay her head upon. Go, fetch her home, I say!

Dick. Take care then of the main chance, my dear mother; remember if you discover me—

Mrs. Aml. Go, fetch her home, I say!

Dick. You promise me then—

Mrs. Aml. March!

Dick. But swear to me—

Mrs. Aml. Begone, sirrah!

Dick. Well, I'll rely upon you.—But one kiss before I go. *[Kisses her heartily, and runs off.]*

Mrs. Aml. Now the Lord love thee; for thou art a comfortable young man! *[Exit.]*

SCENE II.—A Room in GRIPE's House.

Enter CORINNA and FLIPPANTA.

Cor. But hark you, Flippanta, if you don't think he loves me dearly, don't give him my letter after all.

Flip. Let me alone.

Cor. When he has read it, let him give it you again.

Flip. Don't trouble yourself.

Cor. And not a word of the pudding to my mother-in-law.

Flip. Enough.

Cor. When we come to love one another to the purpose, she shall know all.

Flip. Ay, then 'twill be time.

Cor. But remember 'tis you make me do all this now, so if any mischief comes on't, 'tis you must answer for't.

Flip. I'll be your security.

Cor. I'm young, and know nothing of the matter; but you have experience, so it's your business to conduct me safe.

Flip. Poor innocence!

Cor. But tell me in serious sadness, Flippanta, does he love me with the very soul of him?

Flip. I have told you so a hundred times, and yet you are not satisfied.

Cor. But, methinks, I'd fain have him tell me so himself.

Flip. Have patience, and it shall be done.

Cor. Why, patience is a virtue; that we must all confess.—But, I fancy, the sooner it's done the better, Flippanta.

Enter JESSAMIN.

Jes. Madam, yonder's your geography-master waiting for you. *[Exit.]*

Cor. Ah, how I am tired with these old fumbling fellows, Flippanta!

Flip. Well, don't let 'em break your heart, you shall be rid of 'em all ere long.

Cor. Nay, 'tis not the study I'm so weary of, Flippanta, 'tis the odious thing that teaches me. Were the colonel my master, I fancy I could take pleasure in learning everything he could show me.

Flip. And he can show you a great deal, I can tell you that. But get you gone in, here's somebody coming, we must not be seen together.

Cor. I will, I will, I will!—Oh, the dear colonel! *[Exit, running.]*

Enter MRS. AMLET.

Flip. O ho, it's Mrs. Amlet.—What brings you so soon to us again, Mrs. Amlet?

Mrs. Aml. Ah, my dear Mrs. Flippanta, I'm in a furious fright!

Flip. Why, what's come to you?

Mrs. Aml. Ah, mercy on us all!—Madam's diamond necklace—

Flip. What of that?

Mrs. Aml. Are you sure you left it at my house?

Flip. Sure I left it! a very pretty question truly!

Mrs. Aml. Nay, don't be angry; say nothing to madam of it, I beseech you. It will be found again, if it be Heaven's good will. At least 'tis I must bear the loss on't. 'Tis my rogue of a son has laid his birdlime fingers on't.

Flip. Your son, Mrs. Amlet! Do you breed your children up to such tricks as these then?

Mrs. Aml. What shall I say to you, Mrs. Flip-panta? Can I help it? He has been a rogue from his cradle, Dick has. But he has his deserts too. And now it comes in my head, mayhap he may have no ill design in this neither.

Flip. No ill design, woman! He's a pretty fellow if he can steal a diamond necklace with a good one.

Mrs. Aml. You don't know him, Mrs. Flip-panta, so well as I that bore him. Dick's a rogue, 'tis true, but—mum!—

Flip. What does the woman mean!

Mrs. Aml. Hark you, Mrs. Flippanta, is not here a young gentlewoman in your house that wants a husband?

Flip. Why do you ask?

Mrs. Aml. By way of conversation only, it does not concern me; but when she marries, I may chance to dance at the wedding. Remember I tell you so; I who am but Mrs. Amlet.

Flip. You dance at her wedding! you!

Mrs. Aml. Yes I, I; but don't trouble madam about her necklace, perhaps it mayn't go out of the family. Adieu, Mrs. Flippanta. *[Exit.]*

Flip. What—what—what does the woman mean? Mad! What a capitolade of a story's here? The necklace lost; and her son Dick; and a fortune to marry; and she shall dance at the wedding; and—she does not intend, I hope, to propose a match between her son Dick and Corinna? By my conscience I believe she does. An old beldam!

Enter BRASS.

Brass. Well, hussy, how stand our affairs? Has miss writ us an answer yet? my master's very impatient yonder.

Flip. And why the deuse does not he come himself? What does he send such idle fellows as thee of his errands? Here I had her alone just now.—He won't have such an opportunity again this month, I can tell him that.

Brass. So much the worse for him; 'tis his business.—But now, my dear, let thee and I talk a little of our own: I grow most damnably in love with thee; dost hear that?

Flip. Phu! thou art always timing things wrong; my head is full at present of more important things than love.

Brass. Then it's full of important things indeed: dost want a privy-counsellor?

Flip. I want an assistant.

Brass. To do what?

Flip. Mischief.

Brass. I'm thy man—touch.

Flip. But before I venture to let thee into my project, prithee tell me whether thou findest a natural disposition to ruin a husband to oblige his wife?

Brass. Is she handsome?

Flip. Yes.

Brass. Why then my disposition's at her service.

Flip. She's beholden to thee.

Brass. Not she alone neither, therefore don't let her grow vain upon't; for I have three or four affairs of that kind going at this time.

Flip. Well, go carry this epistle from Miss to thy master; and when thou comest back I'll tell thee thy business.

Brass. I'll know it before I go, if you please.

Flip. Thy master waits for an answer.

Brass. I'd rather he should wait than I.

Flip. Why then, in short, Araminta's husband is in love with my lady.

Brass. Very well, child, we have a Rowland for her Oliver: thy lady's husband is in love with Araminta.

Flip. Who told you that, sirrah?

Brass. 'Tis a negotiation I am charged with, pert. Did not I tell thee I did business for half the town? I have managed Master Gripe's little affairs for him these ten years, you slut you.

Flip. Hark thee, Brass, the game's in our hands, if we can but play the cards.

Brass. Pique and repique, you jade you, if the wives will fall into a good intelligence.

Flip. Let them alone; I'll answer for 'em they don't slip the occasion.—See here they come. They little think what a piece of good news we have for 'em.

Enter CLARISSA and ARAMINTA.

Clar. Jessamin!

Enter JESSAMIN.

Here, boy, carry up these things into my dressing-room, and break as many of them by the way as you can, be sure.—*[Exit JESSAMIN.]* Oh, art thou there, Brass! what news?

Brass. Madam, I only called in as I was going by.—But some little propositions Mrs. Flippanta has been starting, have kept me here to offer your ladyship my humble service.

Clar. What propositions?

Brass. She'll acquaint you, madam.

Aram. Is there anything new, Flippanta?

Flip. Yes, and pretty too.

Clar. That follows of course; but let's have it quick.

Flip. Why, madam, you have made a conquest.

Clar. Hussy!—But of who? quick!

Flip. Of Mr. Moneytrap, that's all.

Aram. My husband!

Flip. Yes, your husband, madam. You thought fit to corrupt ours, so now we are even with you.

Aram. Sure thou art in jest, Flippanta!

Flip. Serious as my devotions.

Brass. And the cross intrigue, ladies, is what our brains have been at work about.

Aram. *[To CLARISSA.]* My dear!

Clar. My life!

Aram. My angel!

Clar. My soul!

[Hugging one another.]

Aram. The stars have done this.

Clar. The pretty little twinklers.

Flip. And what will you do for them now?

Clar. What grateful creatures ought; show 'em we don't despise their favours.

Aram. But is not this a wager between these two blockheads?

Clar. I would not give a shilling to go the winner's halves.

Aram. Then 'tis the most fortunate thing that ever could have happened.

Clar. All your last night's ideas, Araminta, were trifles to it.

Aram. Brass (my dear) will be useful to us.

Brass. At your service, madam.

Clar. Flippanta will be necessary, my life.

Flip. She waits your commands, madam.

Aram. For my part then, I recommend my husband to thee, Flippanta, and make it my earnest request thou won't leave him one half-crown.

Flip. I'll do all I can to obey you, madam.

Brass. [*To CLARISSA.*] If your ladyship would give me the same kind orders for yours.

Clar. Oh—if thou sparest him, Brass, I'm thy enemy till I die.

Brass. 'Tis enough, madam, I'll be sure to give you a reasonable account of him. But how do you intend we shall proceed, ladies? Must we storm the purse at once, or break ground in form, and carry it by little and little?

Clar. Storm, dear Brass, storm! Ever whilst you live, storm!

Aram. Oh, by all means!—Must it not be so, Flippanta?

Flip. In four-and-twenty hours, two hundred pounds a-piece, that's my sentence.

Brass. Very well.—But, ladies, you'll give me leave to put you in mind of some little expense in favours, 'twill be necessary you are at, to these honest gentlemen.

Aram. Favours, Brass!

Brass. Um—a—some small matters, madam, I doubt must be.

Clar. Now that's a vile article, Araminta; for that thing your husband is so like mine—

Flip. Phu, there's a scruple, indeed! Pray, madam, don't be so squeamish; though the meat be a little flat, we'll find you savoury sauce to it.

Clar. This wench is so mad.

Flip. Why, what in the name of Lucifer is it you have to do that's so terrible?

Brass. A civil look only.

Aram. There's no great harm in that.

Flip. An obliging word.

Clar. That one may afford 'em.

Brass. A little smile à propos.

Aram. That's but giving one's self an air.

Flip. Receive a little letter, perhaps.

Clar. Women of quality do that from fifty odious fellows.

Brass. Suffer (maybe) a squeeze by the hand.

Aram. One's so used to that one does not feel it.

Flip. Or if a kiss would do't?

Clar. I'd die first!

Brass. Indeed, ladies, I doubt 'twill be necessary to—

Clar. Get their wretched money, without paying so dear for it.

Flip. Well, just as you please for that, my ladies. But I suppose you'll play upon the square with your favours, and not pique yourselves upon being one more grateful than another?

Brass. And state a fair account of receipts and disbursements?

Aram. That I think should be indeed.

Clar. With all my heart, and Brass shall be our bookkeeper. So get thee to work, man, as fast as thou canst; but not a word of all this to thy master.

Brass. I'll observe my orders, madam. [*Exit.*]

Clar. I'll have the pleasure of telling him myself; he'll be violently delighted with it. 'Tis the best man in the world, Araminta; he'll bring us rare company to-morrow, all sorts of gamesters; and thou shalt see my husband will be such a beast to be out of humour at it.

Aram. The monster!—But hush, here's my dear approaching: prithee let's leave him to Flippanta.

Flip. Ay, pray do, I'll bring you a good account of him, I'll warrant you.

Clar. Despatch then, for the basset-table's in haste. [*Exit with ARAMINTA.*]

Flip. So, now have at him; here he comes. We'll try if we can pillage the usurer, as he does other folks.

Enter MONEYTRAP.

Mon. Well, my pretty Flippanta, is thy mistress come home?

Flip. Yes, sir.

Mon. And where is she, prithee?

Flip. Gone abroad, sir.

Mon. How dost mean?

Flip. I mean right, sir; my lady 'll come home and go abroad ten times in an hour, when she's either in very good humour, or very bad.

Mon. Good luck! But I'll warrant, in general, 'tis her naughty husband that makes her house uneasy to her. But hast thou said a little something to her, chicken, for an expiring lover? ha!

Flip. Said I—yes, I have said; much good may it do me!

Mon. Well, and how?

Flip. And how!—And how do you think you would have me do't? And you have such a way with you, one can refuse you nothing. But I have brought myself into a fine business by it.

Mon. Good luck!—But I hope, Flippanta—

Flip. Yes, your hopes will do much, when I am turned out of doors.

Mon. Was she then terrible angry?

Flip. Oh! had you seen how she flew, when she saw where I was pointing; for you must know I went round the bush, and round the bush, before I came to the matter.

Mon. Nay, 'tis a ticklish point, that must be owned.

Flip. On my word is it—I mean where a lady's truly virtuous; for that's our case, you must know.

Mon. A very dangerous case indeed.

Flip. But I can tell you one thing—she has an inclination to you.

Mon. Is it possible!

Flip. Yes, and I told her so at last.

Mon. Well, and what did she answer thee?

Flip. Slap—and bid me bring it you for a token.

[*Giving him a slap on the face.*]

Mon. [*Aside.*] And you have lost none on't by the way, with a pox t'ye!

Flip. Now this, I think, looks the best in the world.

Mon. Yea, but really it feels a little oddly.

Flip. Why, you must know, ladies have different ways of expressing their kindness, according to the humour they are in. If she had been in a good one, it had been a kiss; but as long as she sent you something, your affairs go well.

Mon. Why, truly, I am a little ignorant in the mysterious paths of love, so I must be guided by thee. But, prithee, take her in a good humour next token she sends me.

Flip. Ah—good humour!

Mon. What's the matter?

Flip. Poor lady!

Mon. Ha!

Flip. If I durst tell you all—

Mon. What then?

Flip. You would not expect to see her in one a good while.

Mon. Why, I pray?

Flip. I must own I did take an unseasonable time to talk of love-matters to her.

Mon. Why, what's the matter?

Flip. Nothing.

Mon. Nay, prithee tell me.

Flip. I dare not.

Mon. You must indeed.

Flip. Why, when women are in difficulties, how can they think of pleasure?

Mon. Why, what difficulties can she be in?

Flip. Nay, I do but guess after all; for she has that grandeur of soul, she'd die before she'd tell.

Mon. But what dost thou suspect?

Flip. Why, what should one suspect, where a husband loves nothing but getting of money, and a wife nothing but spending on't?

Mon. So she wants that same then?

Flip. I say no such thing, I know nothing of the matter; pray make no wrong interpretation of what I say, my lady wants nothing that I know of. 'Tis true—she has had ill luck at cards of late; I believe she has not won once this month: but what of that?

Mon. Ha!

Flip. 'Tis true, I know her spirit's that she'd see her husband hanged before she'd ask him for a farthing.

Mon. Ha!

Flip. And then I know him again, he'd see her drowned before he'd give her a farthing; but that's a help to your affair, you know.

Mon. 'Tis so indeed.

Flip. Ah—well, I'll say nothing; but if she had none of these things to fret her—

Mon. Why really, Flippanta—

Flip. I know what you are going to say now; you are going to offer your service, but 'twon't do; you have a mind to play the gallant now, but it must not be, you want to be showing your liberality, but 'twon't be allowed; you'll be pressing me to offer it, and she'll be in a rage. We shall have the devil to do.

Mon. You mistake me, Flippanta; I was only going to say—

Flip. Ay, I know what you were going to say well enough; but I tell you it will never do so. If one could find out some way now—ay—let me see—

Mon. Indeed I hope—

Flip. Pray be quiet—no—but I'm thinking—hum—she'll smoke that though—let us consider.—If one could find a way to—'Tis the nicest point in the world to bring about, she'll never touch it, if she knows from whence it comes.

Mon. Shall I try if I can reason her husband out of twenty pounds, to make her easy the rest of her life?

Flip. Twenty pounds, man!—why you shall see her set that upon a card. Oh, she has a great soul!—Besides, if her husband should oblige her, it might, in time, take off her aversion to him, and by consequence, her inclination to you. No, no, it must never come that way.

Mon. What shall we do then?

Flip. Hold still—I have it. I'll tell you what you shall do.

Mon. Ay.

Flip. You shall make her—a restitution—of two hundred pounds.

Mon. Ha!—a restitution!

Flip. Yes, yes, 'tis the luckiest thought in the world; madam often plays, you know, and folks who do so meet now and then with sharpers. Now you shall be a sharper.

Mon. A sharper!

Flip. Ay, ay, a sharper, and having cheated her of two hundred pounds, shall be troubled in mind, and send it her back again. You comprehend me.

Mon. Yes I—I comprehend, but a—won't she suspect if it be so much?

Flip. No, no, the more the better.

Mon. Two hundred pound!

Flip. Yes, two hundred pound.—Or let me see—so even a sum may look a little suspicious,—ay—let it be two hundred and thirty; that odd thirty will make it look so natural the devil won't find it out.

Mon. Ha!

Flip. Pounds, too, look I don't know how; guineas I fancy were better:—ay, guineas, it shall be guineas. You are of that mind, are you not?

Mon. Um—a guinea, you know, Flippanta, is—

Flip. A thousand times genteeler; you are certainly in the right on't; it shall be as you say, two hundred and thirty guineas.

Mon. Ho—well, if it must be guineas, let s see, two hundred guineas.

Flip. And thirty; two hundred and thirty: if you mistake the sum, you spoil all. So go put 'em in a purse, while it's fresh in your head, and send 'em to me with a penitential letter, desiring I'll do you the favour to restore 'em to her.

Mon. Two hundred and thirty pounds in a bag!

Flip. Guineas, I say, guineas!

Mon. Ay, guineas, that's true. But, Flippanta, if she don't know they come from me, then I give my money for nothing, you know.

Flip. Phu! leave that to me; I'll manage the stock for you, I'll make it produce something, I'll warrant you.

Mon. Well, Flippanta, 'tis a great sum indeed, but I'll go try what I can do for her. You say, two hundred guineas in a purse?

Flip. And thirty, if the man's in his senses!

Mon. And thirty, 'tis true, I always forget that thirty. [Exit.]

Flip. So, get thee gone; thou art a rare fellow, i' faith.—Brass!—it's thee, is't not?

Re-enter BRASS.

Brass. It is, huswife. How go matters? I stayed till thy gentleman was gone. Hast done anything towards our common purse?

Flip. I think I have; he's going to make us a restitution of two or three hundred pounds.

Brass. A restitution!—good!

Flip. A new way, sirrah, to make a lady take a present without putting her to the blush.

Brass. 'Tis very well, mighty well, indeed. Prithee, where's thy master? let me try if I can persuade him to be troubled in mind too.

Flip. Not so hasty; he's gone into his closet to prepare himself for a quarrel. I have advised him to be with his wife.

Brass. What to do?

Flip. Why, to make her stay at home, now she

has resolved to do it beforehand. You must know, sirrah, we intend to make a merit of our basset-table, and get a good pretence for the merry companions we intend to fill his house with.

Brass. Very nicely spun, truly; thy husband will be a happy man.

Flip. Hold your tongue, you fool you! See here comes your master.

Brass. He's welcome.

Enter DICK AMLET.

Dick. My dear Flippanta, how many thanks have I to pay thee!

Flip. Do you like her style?

Dick. The kindest little rogue! there's nothing but she gives me leave to hope. I am the happiest man the world has in its care.

Flip. Not so happy as you think for neither, perhaps; you have a rival, sir, I can tell you that.

Dick. A rival!

Flip. Yes, and a dangerous one too.

Dick. Who, in the name of terror?

Flip. A devilish fellow; one Mr. Amlet.

Dick. Amlet! I know no such man.

Flip. You know the man's mother though; you met her here, and are in her favour, I can tell you. If he worst you in your mistress, you shall e'en marry her, and disinherit him.

Dick. If I have no other rival but Mr. Amlet, I believe I shan't be much disturbed in my amour. But can't I see Corinna?

Flip. I don't know, she has always some of her masters with her: but I'll go see if she can spare you a moment, and bring you word. *[Exit.]*

Dick. I wish my old hobbling mother han't been blabbing something here she should not do.

Brass. Fear nothing, all's safe on that side yet. But how speaks young mistress's epistle? soft and tender?

Dick. As pen can write.

Brass. So you think all goes well there?

Dick. As my heart can wish.

Brass. You are sure on't?

Dick. Sure on't.

Brass. Why then, ceremony aside,—*[Putting on his hat.]* you and I must have a little talk, Mr. Amlet.

Dick. Ah, Brass, what art thou going to do? Wou't ruin me?

Brass. Look you, Dick, few words; you are in a smooth way of making your fortune; I hope all will roll on. But how do you intend matters shall pass 'twixt you and me in this business?

Dick. Death and furies! what a time dost take to talk on't!

Brass. Good words, or I betray you; they have already heard of one Mr. Amlet in the house.

Dick. Here's a son of a whore!

Brass. In short, look smooth, and be a good prince. I am your valet, 'tis true; your footman sometimes, which I'm enraged at; but you have always had the ascendant, I confess. When we were schoolfellows, you made me carry your books, make your exercise, own your rogueries, and sometimes take a whipping for you. When we were fellow-prentices, though I was your senior, you made me open the shop, clean my master's shoes, cut last at dinner, and eat all the crust. In our sins too, I must own you still kept me under; you soared up to adultery with our mistress, while I was

at humble fornication with the maid. Nay, in our punishments you still made good your post; for when once upon a time I was sentenced but to be whipped, I cannot deny but you were condemned to be hanged. So that in all times, I must confess, your inclinations have been greater and nobler than mine: however, I cannot consent that you should at once fix fortune for life, and I dwell in my humilities for the rest of my days.

Dick. Hark thee, Brass, if I do not most nobly by thee, I'm a dog.

Brass. And when?

Dick. As soon as ever I am married.

Brass. Ah, the pox take thee!

Dick. Then you mistrust me?

Brass. I do, by my faith! Look you, sir, some folks we mistrust, because we don't know 'em; others we mistrust, because we do know 'em: and for one of these reasons I desire there may be a bargain beforehand. If not—*[Raising his voice.]* look ye, Dick Amlet—

Dick. Soft, my dear friend and companion.—*[Aside.]* The dog will ruin me!—*[Aloud.]* Say, what is't will content thee?

Brass. O ho!

Dick. But how canst thou be such a barbarian?

Brass. I learned it at Algiers.

Dick. Come, make thy Turkish demand then.

Brass. You know you gave me a bank-bill this morning to receive for you.

Dick. I did so, of fifty pounds; 'tis thine. So, now thou art satisfied, all's fixed.

Brass. It is not, indeed. There's a diamond necklace you robbed your mother of e'en now.

Dick. Ah, you Jew!

Brass. No words.

Dick. My dear Brass!

Brass. I insist.

Dick. My old friend!

Brass. Dick Amlet—*[Raising his voice.]* I insist.

Dick. Ah, the cormorant!—Well, 'tis thine: but thou'll never thrive with 't.

Brass. When I find it begins to do me mischief, I'll give it you again. But I must have a wedding-suit.

Dick. Well.

Brass. Some good lace.

Dick. Thou shalt.

Brass. A stock of linen.

Dick. Enough.

Brass. Not yet; a silver sword.

Dick. Well, thou shalt have that too. Now thou hast everything.

Brass. God forgive me! I forgot a ring of remembrance: I would not forget all these favours for the world. A sparkling diamond will be always playing in my eye, and put me in mind of 'em.

Dick. *[Aside.]* This unconscionable rogue!—*[Aloud.]* Well, I'll bespeak one for thee.

Brass. Brilliant?

Dick. It shall. But if the thing don't succeed after all?—

Brass. I'm a man of honour, and restore: and so the treaty being finished, I strike my flag of defiance, and fall into my respects again.

[Taking off his hat.]

Re-enter FLIPPANTA.

Flip. I have made you wait a little, but I could not help it; her master is but just gone. He has been showing her Prince Eugene's March into Italy.

Dick. Prithee, let me come to her, I'll show her a part of the world he has never shown her yet.

Flip. So I told her, you must know; and she said, she could like to travel in good company: so, if you'll slip up those back-stairs, you shall try if you can agree upon the journey.

Dick. My dear Flippanta!

Flip. None of your dear acknowledgments, I beseech you, but up stairs as hard as you can drive.

Dick. I'm gone.

[*Exit.*]

Flip. And do you follow him, Jack-a-dandy, and see he is not surprised.

Brass. I thought that was your post, Mrs. Useful. But if you'll come and keep me in

humour, I don't care if I share the duty with you.

Flip. No words, sirrah, but follow him; I have somewhat else to do.

Brass. The jade's so absolute, there's no contesting with her. One kiss though, to keep the sentinel warm.—[*Gives her a long kiss.*] So.

[*Exit.*]

Flip. [*Wiping her mouth.*] A nasty rogue. But let me see, what have I to do now? This restitution will be here quickly, I suppose; in the mean time I'll go know if my lady's ready for the quarrel yet. Master, yonder, is so full on't, he's ready to burst; but we'll give him vent by-and-by with a witness.

[*Exit.*]

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*A Room in GRIPE's House.*

Enter CORINNA, DICK AMLET, and BRASS.

Brass. Don't fear, I'll give timely notice.

[*Goes to the door.*]

Dick. Come, you must consent, you shall consent. How can you leave me thus upon the rack? a man who loves you to that excess that I do.

Cor. Nay, that you love me, sir, that I am satisfied in, for you have sworn you do: and I am so pleased with it, I'd fain have you do so as long as you live, so we must never marry.

Dick. Not marry, my dear! why, what's our love good for if we don't marry?

Cor. Ah!—I'm afraid 'twill be good for little if we do.

Dick. Why do you think so?

Cor. Because I hear my father and mother, and my uncle and aunt, and Araminta and her husband, and twenty other married folks, say so from morn-ing to night.

Dick. Oh, that's because they are bad husbands and bad wives; but, in our case, there will be a good husband and a good wife, and so we shall love for ever.

Cor. Why, there may be something in that truly; and I'm always willing to hear reason, as a reasonable young woman ought to do. But are you sure, sir, though we are very good now, we shall be so when we come to be better acquainted?

Dick. I can answer for myself, at least.

Cor. I wish you could answer for me too. You see I am a plain-dealer, sir, I hope you don't like me the worse for it.

Dick. Oh, by no means! 'Tis a sign of admirable morals; and I hope, since you practise it yourself, you'll approve of it in your lover. In one word, therefore, (for 'tis in vain to mince the matter,) my resolution's fixed, and the world can't stagger me, I marry—or I die.

Cor. Indeed, sir, I have much ado to believe you; the disease of love is seldom so violent.

Dick. Madam, I have two diseases to end my miseries; if the first don't do't, the latter shall;—[*Drawing his sword*] one's in my heart, t'other's in my scabbard.

Cor. Not for a diadem!—[*Catching hold of him.*] Ah, put it up! put it up!

Dick. How absolute is your command!—[*Dropping his sword.*] A word, you see, disarms me.

Cor. [*Aside.*] What a power I have over him! The wondrous deeds of love!—[*Aloud.*] Pray, sir, let me have no more of these rash doings though; perhaps I mayn't be always in the saving humour. —[*Aside.*] I'm sure if I had let him stick himself, I should have been envied by all the great ladies in the town.

Dick. Well, madam, have I then your promise? You'll make me the happiest of mankind?

Cor. I don't know what to say to you; but I believe I had as good promise, for I find I shall certainly do't.

Dick. Then let us seal the contract thus.

[*Kisses her.*]

Cor. [*Aside.*] Um—he has almost taken away my breath: he kisses purely!

Dick. Hark!—somebody comes.

Brass. [*Peeping in.*] Gare there! the enemy! —No, hold! y'are safe, 'tis Flippanta.

Enter FLIPPANTA.

Flip. Come, have you agreed the matter? If not, you must end it another time, for your father's in motion, so, pray kiss and part.

Cor. That's sweet and sour.—[*They kiss.*] Adieu t'ye, sir! [*Exeunt DICK AMLET and CORINNA.*]

Enter CLARISSA.

Clar. Have you told him I'm at home, Flippanta?

Flip. Yes, madam.

Clar. And that I'll see him?

Flip. Yes, that too. But here's news for you! I have just now received the restitution.

Clar. That's killing pleasure; and how much has he restored me?

Flip. Two hundred and thirty.

Clar. Wretched rogue! But retreat; your master's coming to quarrel.

Flip. I'll be within call, if things run high.

[*Exit.*]

Enter GRIPE.

Gripe. O ho!—are you there i'faith? Madam, your humble servant, I'm very glad to see you at home, I thought I should never have had that honour again.

Clar. Good-morrow, my dear, how d'ye do? Flippanta says you are out of humour, and that you have a mind to quarrel with me. Is it true? ha!—I have a terrible pain in my head, I give you notice on't beforehand.

Gripe. And how the pox should it be otherwise? It's a wonder you are not dead—[*Aside*] as a' would you were!—[*Aloud*] with the life you lead. Are you not ashamed? and do you not blush to—

Clar. My dear child, you crack my brain; soften the harshness of your voice. Say what thou won't, but let it be in an agreeable tone.

Gripe. Tone, madam! don't tell me of a tone—

Clar. Oh,—if you will quarrel, do it with temperance; let it be all in cool blood, even and smooth, as if you were not moved with what you said; and then I'll hear you as if I were not moved with it neither.

Gripe. Had ever man such need of patience! Madam, madam, I must tell you, madam—

Clar. Another key, or I walk off.

Gripe. Don't provoke me.

Clar. Shall you be long, my dear, in your remonstrances?

Gripe. Yes, madam, and very long.

Clar. If you would quarrel in *abrégee*, I should have a world of obligation to you.

Gripe. What I have to say, forsooth, is not to be expressed in *abrégee*, my complaints are too numerous.

Clar. Complaints! of what, my dear? Have I ever given you subject of complaint, my life?

Gripe. O pox! my dear and my life! I desire none of your tendres.

Clar. How! find fault with my kindness, and my expressions of affection and respect? The world will guess by this what the rest of your complaints may be. I must tell you I'm scandalised at your procedure.

Gripe. I must tell you I'm running mad with yours.

Clar. Ah! how insupportable are the humours of some husbands, so full of fancies, and so ungovernable! What have you in the world to disturb you?

Gripe. What have I to disturb me! I have you, death and the devil!

Clar. Ay, merciful Heaven! how he swears! You should never accustom yourself to such words as these; indeed, my dear, you should not; your mouth's always full of 'em.

Gripe. Blood and thunder! madam—

Clar. Ah, he'll fetch the house down! Do you know you make me tremble for you?—Flippanta! who's there? Flippanta!

Gripe. Here's a provoking devil for you!

Re-enter FLIPPANTA.

Flip. What in the name of Jove's the matter? you'll raise the neighbourhood.

Clar. Why, here's your master in a most violent fuss, and no mortal soul can tell for what.

Gripe. Not tell for what!

Clar. No, my life.—I have begged him to tell me his griefs, Flippanta; and then he swears, good Lord, how he does swear!

Gripe. Ah you wicked jade! ah you wicked jade!

Clar. Do you hear him, Flippanta! do you hear him!

Flip. Pray, sir, let's know a little what puts you in all this fury?

Clar. Prithee stand near me, Flippanta, there's an odd froth about his mouth, looks as if his poor head were going wrong, I'm afraid he'll bite.

Gripe. The wicked woman, Flippanta, the wicked woman!

Clar. Can anybody wonder I shun my own house, when he treats me at this rate in it?

Gripe. At this rate! Why in the devil's name—

Clar. Do you hear him again?

Flip. Come, a little moderation, sir, and try what that will produce.

Gripe. Hang her, 'tis all a pretence to justify her going abroad.

Clar. A pretence! a pretence! Do you hear how black a charge he loads me with? Charges me with a pretence! Is this the return for all my downright open actions? You know, my dear, I scorn pretences: when'er I go abroad, it is without pretence.

Gripe. Give me patience!

Flip. You have a great deal, sir.

Clar. And yet he's never content, Flippanta.

Gripe. What shall I do!

Clar. What a reasonable man would do; own yourself in the wrong, and be quiet. Here's Flippanta has understanding, and I have moderation; I'm willing to make her judge of our differences.

Flip. You do me a great deal of honour, madam: but I tell you beforehand, I shall be a little on master's side.

Gripe. Right, Flippanta has sense. Come, let her decide.—Have I not reason to be in a passion? tell me that.

Clar. You must tell her for what, my life.

Gripe. Why, for the trade you drive, my soul.

Flip. Look you, sir, pray take things right. I know madam does fret you a little now and then, that's true; but in the fund she is the softest, sweetest, gentlest lady breathing. Let her but live entirely to her own fancy, and she'll never say a word to you from morning to night.

Gripe. Ooms! let her but stay at home, and she shall do what she will: in reason, that is.

Flip. D'ye hear that, madam? Nay, now I must be on master's side; you see how he loves you, he desires only your company. Pray give him that satisfaction, or I must pronounce against you.

Clar. Well, I agree. Thou knowest I don't love to grieve him: let him be always in good humour, and I'll be always at home.

Flip. Look you there, sir, what would you have more?

Gripe. Well, let her keep her word, and I'll have done quarrelling.

Clar. I must not, however, so far lose the merit of my consent, as to let you think I'm weary of going abroad, my dear. What I do, is purely to oblige you; which, that I may be able to perform without a relapse, I'll invent what ways I can to make my prison supportable to me.

Flip. Her prison! pretty bird! her prison? don't that word melt you, sir?

Gripe. I must confess I did not expect to find her so reasonable.

Flip. Oh, sir, soon or late wives come into good humour. Husbands must only have a little patience to wait for it.

Clar. The innocent little diversions, dear, that I

shall content myself with, will be chiefly play and company.

Gripe. Oh, I'll find you employment, your time shan't lie upon your hands; though if you, have a mind now for such a companion as a—let me see—Araminta for example, why I shan't be against her being with you from morning till night.

Clar. You can't oblige me more, 'tis the best woman in the world.

Gripe. Is not she?

Flip. Ah, the old satyr!

[*Aside.*

Gripe. Then we'll have, besides her, maybe sometimes—her husband; and we shall see my niece that writes verses, and my sister Fidget; with her husband's brother that's always merry; and his little cousin, that's to marry the fat curate; and my uncle the apothecary, with his wife and all his children. Oh, we shall divert ourselves rarely!

Flip. Good!

[*Aside.*

Clar. Oh, for that, my dear child, I must be plain with you, I'll see none of 'em but Araminta, who has the manners of the court; for I'll converse with none but women of quality.

Gripe. Ay, ay, they shall all have one quality or other.

Clar. Then, my dear, to make our home pleasant, we'll have consorts of music sometimes.

Gripe. Music in my house!

Clar. Yes, my child, we must have music, or the house will be so dull I shall get the spleen, and be going abroad again.

Flip. Nay, she has so much complaisance for you, sir, you can't dispute such things with her.

Gripe. Ay, but if I have music—

Clar. Ay, but sir, I must have music—

Flip. Not every day, madam don't mean.

Clar. No, bless me, no; but three consorts a week: three days more we'll play after dinner, at ombre, piquet, basset, and so forth, and close the evening with a handsome supper and a ball.

Gripe. A ball!

Clar. Then, my love, you know there is but one day more upon our hands, and that shall be the day of conversation, we'll read verses, talk of books, invent modes, tell lies, scandalise our friends, be pert upon religion; and in short, employ every moment of it in some pretty witty exercise or other.

Flip. What order you see 'tis she proposes to live in! a most wonderful regularity!

Gripe. Regularity with a pox!

[*Aside.*

Clar. And as this kind of life, so soft, so smooth, so agreeable, must needs invite a vast deal of company to partake of it, 'twill be necessary to have the decency of a porter at our door, you know.

Gripe. A porter!—a scrivener have a porter, madam!

Clar. Positively, a porter.

Gripe. Why, no scrivener since Adam ever had a porter, woman!

Clar. You will therefore be renowned in story, for having the first, my life.

Gripe. Flippanta!

Flip. [*Aside to GRIPPE.*] Hang it, sir, never dispute a trifle; if you vex her, perhaps she'll insist upon a Swiss.

Gripe. But, madam—

Clar. But, sir, a porter, positively a porter; without that the treaty's null, and I go abroad this moment.

Flip. Come, sir, never lose so advantageous a peace for a pitiful porter.

Gripe. Why, I shall be hooted at, the boys will throw stones at my porter. Besides, where shall I have money for all this expense?

Clar. My dear, who asks you for any? Don't be in a fright, chicken.

Gripe. Don't be in a fright, madam! But where, I say—

Flip. Madam plays, sir, think on that; women that play have inexhaustible mines, and wives who receive least money from their husbands, are many times those who spend the most.

Clar. So, my dear, let what Flippanta says content you. Go, my life, trouble yourself with nothing, but let me do just as I please, and all will be well. I'm going into my closet, to consider of some more things to enable me to give you the pleasure of my company at home, without making it too great a misery to a yielding wife.

[*Exit.*

Flip. Mirror of goodness! Pattern to all wives! Well sure, sir, you are the happiest of all husbands!

Gripe. Yes—and a miserable dog for all that too, perhaps.

Flip. Why what can you ask more than this matchless complaisance?

Gripe. I don't know what I can ask, and yet I'm not satisfied with what I have neither, the devil mixes in it all, I think; complaisant or perverse, it feels just as't did.

Flip. Why, then, your uneasiness is only a disease, sir; perhaps a little bleeding and purging would relieve you.

Clar. [*Calling within.*] Flippanta!

Flip. Madam calls.—I come, madam.—Come, be merry, be merry, sir, you have cause, take my word for't.—[*Aside.*] Poor devil!

[*Exit.*

Gripe. I don't know that, I don't know that; but this I do know, that an honest man, who has married a jade, whether she's pleased to spend her time at home or abroad, had better have lived a bachelor.

Re-enter BRASS.

Brass. Oh, sir, I'm mighty glad I have found you.

Gripe. Why, what's the matter, prithee?

Brass. Can nobody hear us?

Gripe. No, no, speak quickly.

Brass. You han't seen Araminta since the last letter I carried her from you?

Gripe. Not I, I go prudently; I don't press things like your young firebrand lovers.

Brass. But seriously, sir, are you very much in love with her?

Gripe. As mortal man has been.

Brass. I'm sorry for't.

Gripe. Why so, dear Brass?

Brass. If you were never to see her more now? Suppose such a thing, d'you think 'twould break your heart?

Gripe. Oh!

Brass. Nay, now I see you love her; would you did not!

Gripe. My dear friend!

Brass. I'm in your interest deep; you see it.

Gripe. I do: but speak, what miserable story hast thou for me?

Brass. I had rather the devil had, phu!—flown

away with you quick, than to see you so much in love, as I perceive you are, since—

Gripe. Since what?—ho!

Brass. Araminta, sir—

Gripe. Dead?

Brass. No.

Gripe. How then?

Brass. Worse.

Gripe. Out with't.

Brass. Broke.

Gripe. Broke!

Brass. She is, poor lady, in the most unfortunate situation of affairs. But I have said too much.

Gripe. No, no, 'tis very sad, but let's hear it.

Brass. Sir, she charged me, on my life, never to mention it to you, of all men living.

Gripe. Why, who shouldst thou tell it to, but to the best of her friends?

Brass. Ay, why there's it now, it's going just as I fancied. Now will I be hanged if you are not enough in love to be engaging in this matter. But I must tell you, sir, that as much concern as I have for that most excellent, beautiful, agreeable, distressed, unfortunate lady, I'm too much your friend and servant, ever to let it be said, 'twas the means of your being ruined for a woman—by letting you know she esteemed you more than any other man upon earth.

Gripe. Ruined! what dost thou mean?

Brass. Mean! why I mean that women always ruin those that love 'em, that's the rule.

Gripe. The rule!

Brass. Yes, the rule; why, would you have 'em ruin those that don't? How shall they bring that about?

Gripe. But is there a necessity then they should ruin somebody?

Brass. Yes, marry is there; how would you have 'em support their expense else? Why, sir, you can't conceive now—you can't conceive what Araminta's privy-purse requires: only her privy-purse, sir! Why, what do you imagine now she gave me for the last letter I carried her from you? 'Tis true, 'twas from a man she liked, else, perhaps, I had had my bones broke. But what do you think she gave me?

Gripe. Why, mayhap—a shilling.

Brass. A guinea, sir, a guinea! You see by that how fond she was on't, by the by. But then, sir, her coach-hire, her chair-hire, her pin-money, her play-money, her china, and her charity—would consume peers. A great soul, a very great soul! but what's the end of all this?

Gripe. Ha!

Brass. Why, I'll tell you what the end is—a nunnery.

Gripe. A nunnery!

Brass. A nunnery.—In short, she is at last reduced to that extremity, and attacked with such a battalion of duns, that rather than tell her husband (who you know is such a dog, he'd let her go if she did) she has e'en determined to turn papist, and bid the world adieu for life.

Gripe. O terrible! a papist!

Brass. Yes, when a handsome woman has brought herself into difficulties, the devil can't help her out of—to a nunnery, that's another rule, sir.

Gripe. But, but, but, prithee Brass, but—

Brass. But all the buts in the world, sir, won't

stop her; she's a woman of a noble resolution. So, sir, your humble servant; I pity her, I pity you, turtle and mate; but the fates will have it so, all's packed up, and I am now going to call her a coach, for she resolves to slip off without saying a word; and the next visit she receives from her friends will be through a melancholy grate, with a veil instead of a top-knot. *[Going.]*

Gripe. It must not be, by the powers it must not! she was made for the world, and the world was made for her.

Brass. And yet you see, sir, how small a share she has on't.

Gripe. Poor woman! is there no way to save her?

Brass. Save her! no; how can she be saved? Why she owes above five hundred pound.

Gripe. Oh!

Brass. Five hundred pound, sir; she's like to be saved indeed!—Not but that I know them in this town would give me one of the five if I would persuade her to accept of t'other four: but she has forbid me mentioning it to any soul living; and I have disobeyed her only to you; and so—I'll go and call a coach.

Gripe. Hold!—Dost think, my poor Brass, one might not order it so as to compound those debts for—for—twelve pence in the pound?

Brass. Sir, d'ye hear? I have already tried 'em with ten shillings, and not a rogue will prick up his ear at it. Though after all, for three hundred pounds all in glittering gold, I could set their chaps a-watering. But where's that to be had with honour? there's the thing, sir.—I'll go and call a coach.

Gripe. Hold, once more: I have a note in my closet of two hundred, ay—and fifty, I'll go and give it her myself.

Brass. You will; very genteel truly! Go, slap dash, and offer a woman of her scruples money bolt in her face! Why, you might as well offer her a scorpion, and she'd as soon touch it.

Gripe. Shall I carry it to her creditors then, and treat with them?

Brass. Ay, that's a rare thought.

Gripe. Is not it, Brass?

Brass. Only one little inconvenience by the way.

Gripe. As how?

Brass. That they are your wife's creditors as well as hers; and perhaps it might not be altogether so well to see you clearing the debts of your neighbour's wife, and leaving those of your own unpaid.

Gripe. Why that's true now.

Brass. I'm wise you see, sir.

Gripe. Thou art; and I'm but a young lover. But what shall we do then?

Brass. Why I'm thinking, that if you give me the note, do you see, and that I promise to give you an account of it—

Gripe. Ay, but look you, Brass—

Brass. But look you!—Why what, d'ye think I'm a pickpocket? D'ye think I intend to run away with your note? your paltry note!

Gripe. I don't say so—I say only that in case—

Brass. Case, sir! there's no case but the case I have put you; and since you heap cases upon cases, where there is but three hundred rascally pounds in the case—I'll go and call a coach.

Gripe. Prithee don't be so testy; come, no more

words, follow me to my closet, and I'll give thee the money.

Brass. A terrible effort you make indeed ; you are so much in love, your wits are all upon the wing, just a-going ; and for three hundred pounds you put a stop to their flight. Sir, your wits are worth that, or your wits are worth nothing. Come away.

Gripe. Well say no more, thou shalt be satisfied. [*Exeunt.*]

Re-enter DICK AMLET.

Dick. S't !—Brass ! S't !—

Re-enter BRASS.

Brass. Well, sir !

Dick. 'Tis not well, sir, 'tis very ill, sir ; we shall be all blown up.

Brass. What, with pride and plenty ?

Dick. No, sir, with an officious slut that will spoil all. In short, Flippanta has been telling her mistress and Araminta of my passion for the young gentlewoman ; and truly to oblige me (supposed no ill match by the by) they are resolved to propose it immediately to her father.

Brass. That's the devil ! We shall come to papers and parchments, jointures and settlements, relations meet on both sides ; that's the devil !

Dick. I intended this very day to propose to Flippanta the carrying her off : and I'm sure the young housewife would have tucked up her coats, and have marched.

Brass. Ay, with the body and the soul of her.

Dick. Why, then, what damned luck is this ?

Brass. 'Tis your damned luck, not mine. I have always seen it in your ugly phiz, in spite of your powdered periwig.—Pox take ye !—he'll be hanged at last.—Why don't you try to get her off yet ?

Dick. I have no money, you dog ; you know you have stripped me of every penny.

Brass. Come, damn it, I'll venture one cargo more upon your rotten bottom : but if ever I see one glance of your hempen fortune again, I'm off of your partnership for ever.—I shall never thrive with him.

Dick. An impudent rogue ! but he's in possession of my estate, so I must bear with him. [*Aside.*]

Brass. Well, come, I'll raise a hundred pounds for your use, upon my wife's jewels here.—[*Pulling out the necklace.*] Her necklace shall pawn for't.

Dick. Remember, though, that if things fail, I'm to have the necklace again ; you know you agreed to that.

Brass. Yes, and if I make it good, you'll be the better for't ; if not, I shall : so you see where the cause will pinch.

Dick. Why, you barbarous dog, you won't offer to—

Brass. No words now ; about your business, march ! Go stay for me at the next tavern : I'll go to Flippanta, and try what I can do for you.

Dick. Well, I'll go, but don't think to—O pox, sir !— [*Exit.*]

Brass. Will you be gone ? A pretty title you'd have to sue me upon truly, if I should have a mind to stand upon the defensive, as perhaps I may. I have done the rascal service enough to lull my conscience upon't I'm sure : but 'tis time enough for that. Let me see—first I'll go to Flippanta, and put a stop to this family way of match-making, then sell our necklace for what ready money 'twill produce ; and by this time to-morrow I hope we shall be in possession of—t'other jewel here ; a precious jewel, as she's set in gold : I believe for the stone itself we may part with't again to a friend—for a tester. [*Exit.*]

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*A Room in GRIPE'S House.*

Enter BRASS and FLIPPANTA.

Brass. Well, you agree I'm in the right, don't you ?

Flip. I don't know ; if your master has the estate he talks of, why not do't all above-board ? Well, though I am not much of his mind, I'm much in his interest, and will therefore endeavour to serve him in his own way.

Brass. That's kindly said, my child, and I believe I shall reward thee one of these days, with as pretty a fellow to thy husband for't as—

Flip. Hold your prating Jackadandy, and leave me to my business.

Brass. I obey—adieu ! [*Kisses her, and exit.*]

Flip. Rascal !

Enter CORINNA.

Cor. Ah, Flippanta, I'm ready to sink down ! my legs tremble under me, my dear Flippy !

Flip. And what's the affair ?

Cor. My father's there within with my mother and Araminta ; I never saw him in so good a humour in my life.

Flip. And is that it that frightens you so ?

Cor. Ah, Flippanta, they are just going to speak to him about my marrying the colonel.

Flip. Are they so ! so much the worse : they're too hasty.

Cor. O no, not a bit ; I slipped out on purpose, you must know, to give 'em an opportunity ; would 'twere done already !

Flip. I tell you no ; get you in again immediately, and prevent it.

Cor. My dear, dear, I am not able ; I never was in such a way before.

Flip. Never in a way to be married before, ha ? is not that it ?

Cor. Ah, Lord, if I'm thus before I come to't, Flippanta, what shall I be upon the very spot ? Do but feel with what a thumpaty thump it goes.

[*Putting her hand to her heart.*]
Flip. Nay, it does make a filthy bustle, that's the truth on't, child. But I believe I shall make it leap another way when I tell you I'm cruelly afraid your father won't consent after all.

Cor. Why, he won't be the death o'me, will he ?

Flip. I don't know, old folks are cruel ; but we'll have a trick for him. Brass and I have been con-

sulting upon the matter, and agreed upon a surer way of doing it in spite of his teeth.

Cor. Ay, marry, sir, that were something.

Flip. But then he must not know a word of anything towards it.

Cor. No, no.

Flip. So, get you in immediately.

Cor. One, two, three, and away! [*Running off.*]

Flip. And prevent your mother's speaking on't.

Cor. But is t'other way sure, Flippanta?

Flip. Fear nothing, 'twill only depend upon you.

Cor. Nay then—O ho! ho! ho! how pure that is! [*Exit.*]

Flip. Poor child! we may do what we will with her, as far as marrying her goes: when that's over, 'tis possible she mayn't prove altogether so tractable. But who's here? my sharper, I think: yes.

Enter MONEYTRAP.

Mon. Well, my best friend, how go matters? Has the restitution been received, ha? Was she pleased with it?

Flip. Yes, truly; that is, she was pleased to see there was so honest a man in this immoral age.

Mon. Well, but a—does she know that 'twas I that—

Flip. Why, you must know I begun to give her a little sort of a hint, and—and so—why, and so she begun to put on a sort of a severe, haughty, reserved, angry, forgiving air. But soft; here she comes. You'll see how you stand with her presently: but don't be afraid. Courage!

Mon. He, hem!

Enter CLARISSA.

'Tis no small piece of good fortune, madam, to find you at home: I have often endeavoured it in vain.

Clar. 'Twas then unknown to me, for if I could often receive the visits of so good a friend at home, I should be more reasonably blamed for being so much abroad.

Mon. Madam, you make me—

Clar. You are the man of the world whose company I think is most to be desired. I don't compliment you when I tell you so, I assure you.

Mon. Alas, madam; your poor humble servant—

Clar. My poor humble servant however (with all the esteem I have for him) stands suspected with me for a vile trick I doubt he has played me, which if I could prove upon him I'm afraid I should punish him very severely.

Mon. I hope, madam, you'll believe I am not capable of—

Clar. Look you, look you, you are capable of whatever you please, you have a great deal of wit, and know how to give a nice and gallant turn to everything; but if you will have me continue your friend, you must leave me in some uncertainty in this matter.

Mon. Madam, I do then protest to you—

Clar. Come, protest nothing about it, I am but too penetrating, as you may perceive; but we sometimes shut our eyes rather than break with our friends; for a thorough knowledge of the truth of this business, would make me very seriously angry.

Mon. 'Tis very certain, madam, that—

Clar. Come, say no more on't, I beseech you, for I'm in a good deal of heat while I but think on't; if you'll walk in, I'll follow you presently.

Mon. Your goodness, madam, is—

Flip. [*Aside to MONEYTRAP.*] War horse! No fine speeches, you'll spoil all.

Mon. Thou art a most incomparable person.

Flip. Nay, it goes rarely; but get you in, and I'll say a little something to my lady for you while she's warm.

Mon. But s't, Flippanta, how long dost think she may hold out?

Flip. Phu! not a twelvemonth.

Mon. Boo!

Flip. Away, I say! [*Pushing him out.*]

Clar. Is he gone? What a wretch it is! he never was quite such a beast before.

Flip. Poor mortal, his money's finely laid out truly!

Clar. I suppose there may have been much such another scene within between Araminta and my dear. But I left him so insupportably brisk 'tis impossible he can have parted with any money. I'm afraid Brass has not succeeded as thou hast done, Flippanta.

Flip. By my faith but he has, and better too; he presents his humble duty to Araminta, and has sent her—this. [*Showing the note.*]

Clar. A bill from my love for two hundred and fifty pounds! The monster! he would not part with ten to save his lawful wife from everlasting torment.

Flip. Never complain of his avarice, madam, as long as you have his money.

Clar. But is not he a beast, Flippanta? methinks the restitution looked better by half.

Flip. Madam, the man's beast enough, that's certain; but which way will you go to receive his beastly money, for I must not appear with his note?

Clar. That's true; why send for Mrs. Amlet; that's a mighty useful woman that Mrs. Amlet.

Flip. Marry is she; we should have been basely puzzled how to dispose of the necklace without her, 'twould have been dangerous offering it to sale.

Clar. It would so, for I know your master has been laying out for't amongst the goldsmiths. But I stay here too long, I must in and coquette it a little more to my lover, Araminta will get ground on me else.

Flip. And I'll go send for Mrs. Amlet.

[*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE II.—Another Room in the same.

ARAMINTA, CORINNA, GRIPE, and MONEYTRAP, are discovered at a tea-table, very gay and laughing.

All. Ha! ha! ha! ha!

Mon. Mighty well, O mighty well indeed!

Enter CLARISSA.

Clar. Save you, save you, good folks! you are all in rare humour methinks.

Gripe. Why, what should we be otherwise for, madam?

Clar. Nay, I don't know, not I, my dear; but I han't had the happiness of seeing you so since our honeymoon was over, I think.

Gripe. Why to tell you the truth my dear, 'tis the joy of seeing you at home.—[*Kisses her.*] You see what charms you have when you are pleased to make use of 'em.

Aram. Very gallant truly.

Clar. Nay, and what's more, you must know, he's never to be otherwise henceforwards; we have come to an agreement about it.

Mon. Why, here's my love and I have been upon just such another treaty too.

Aram. Well, sure there's some very peaceful star rules at present. Pray Heaven continue its reign.

Mon. Pray do you continue its reign, you ladies; for 'tis all in your power.

[*Leering at CLARISSA.*]

Gripe. My neighbour Moneytrap says true, at least I'll confess frankly [*Ogling ARAMINTA*] 'tis in one lady's power to make me the best-humoured man on earth.

Mon. And I'll answer for another that has the same over me.

[*Ogling CLARISSA.*]

Clar. 'Tis mighty fine, gentlemen! mighty civil husbands, indeed!

Gripe. Nay, what I say's true, and so true, that all quarrels being now at an end, I am willing, if you please, to dispense with all that fine company we talked of to-day, be content with the friendly conversation of our two good neighbours here, and spend all my toying hours alone with my sweet wife.

Mon. Why, truly, I think now, if these good women pleased, we might make up the prettiest little neighbourly company between our two families, and set a defiance to all the impertinent people in the world.

Clar. The rascals! [*Aside.*]

Aram. Indeed I doubt you'd soon grow weary, if we grew fond.

Gripe. Never, never, for our wives have wit, neighbour, and that never palls.

Clar. And our husbands have generosity, Araminta, and that seldom palls.

Gripe. So, that's a wipe for me now, because I did not give her a new-year's-gift last time; but be good, and I'll think of some tea-cups for you, next year.

Mon. And perhaps I mayn't forget a fan, or as good a thing—hum, hussy.

Clar. Well, upon these encouragements, Araminta, we'll try how good we can be.

Gripe. [*Aside.*] Well, this goes most rarely! Poor Moneytrap, he little thinks what makes his wife so easy in his company.

Mon. [*Aside.*] I can but pity poor neighbour Gripe. Lord, Lord, what a fool does his wife and I make of him!

Clar. [*Aside to ARAMINTA.*] Are not these two wretched rogues, Araminta?

Aram. [*Aside to CLARISSA.*] They are indeed.

Enter JESSAMIN.

Jes. Sir, here's Mr. Clip, the goldsmith, desires to speak with you.

Gripe. Cods so, perhaps some news of your necklace, my dear.

Clar. That would be news indeed.

Gripe. Let him come in. [*Exit JESSAMIN.*]

Enter Mr. CLIP.

Gripe. Mr. Clip, your servant; I'm glad to see you: how do you do?

Clip. At your service, sir, very well.—Your servant, madam Gripe.

Clar. Horrid fellow!

[*Aside.*]

Gripe. Well, Mr. Clip, no news yet of my wife's necklace?

Clip. If you please to let me speak with you in the next room, I have something to say to you.

Gripe. Ay, with all my heart. Shut the door after us.—[*They come forward, and the scene shuts behind them.*] Well, any news?

Clip. Look you, sir, here's a necklace brought me to sell, at least very like that you described to me.

Gripe. Let's see't.—*Victoria!* the very same. Ah, my dear Mr. Clip! [*Kisses him.*] But who brought it you? you should have seized him.

Clip. 'Twas a young fellow that I know: I can't tell whether he may be guilty, though it's like enough. But he has only left it me now, to show a brother of our trade, and will call upon me again presently.

Gripe. Wheedle him hither, dear Mr. Clip. Here's my neighbour Moneytrap in the house; he's a justice, and will commit him presently.

Clip. 'Tis enough.

Enter BRASS.

Gripe. O, my friend Brass!

Brass. Hold, sir, I think that's a gentleman I'm looking for.—Mr. Clip, oh, your servant! What, are you acquainted here? I have just been at your shop.

Clip. I only stepped here to show Mr. Gripe the necklace you left.

Brass. [*To GRIPPE.*] Why, sir, do you understand jewels? I thought you had dealt only in gold. But I smoke the matter, hark you—a word in your ear—you are going to play the gallant again, and make a purchase on't for Araminta; ha, ha?

Gripe. Where had you the necklace?

Brass. Look you, don't trouble yourself about that; it's in commission with me, and I can help you to a pennyworth on't.

Gripe. A pennyworth on't, villain?

[*Strikes at him.*]

Brass. Villain! ahey, ahey! Is't you or me, Mr. Clip, he's pleased to compliment?

Clip. What do you think on't, sir?

Brass. Think on't! now the devil fetch me if I know what to think on't.

Gripe. You'll sell a pennyworth, rogue! of a thing you have stolen from me.

Brass. Stolen! pray, sir—what wine have you drank to-day? It has a very merry effect upon you.

Gripe. You villain! either give me an account how you stole it, or—

Brass. O ho, sir, if you please, don't carry your jest too far; I don't understand hard words, I give you warning on't. If you han't a mind to buy the necklace, you may let it alone; I know how to dispose on't. What a pox!—

Gripe. Oh, you shan't have that trouble, sir.—Dear Mr. Clip, you may leave the necklace here. I'll call at your shop, and thank you for your care.

Clip. Sir, your humble servant. [*Going.*]

Brass. O ho, Mr. Clip, if you please sir, this won't do!—[*Stopping him.*] I don't understand rillery in such matters.

Clip. I leave it with Mr. Gripe do you and he dispute it. [*Exit.*]

Brass. Ay, but 'tis from you, by your leave, sir, that I expect it. [Going after him.]

Gripe. You expect, you rogue, to make your escape, do you? But I have other accounts besides this to make up with you. To be sure the dog has cheated me of two hundred and fifty pound. Come, villain, give me an account of—

Brass. Account of!—sir, give me an account of my necklace, or I'll make such a noise in your house I'll raise the devil in't.

Gripe. Well said, Courage!

Brass. Blood and thunder, give it me, or—

Gripe. Come, hush, be wise, and I'll make no noise of this affair.

Brass. You'll make no noise! but I'll make a noise, and a damned noise too. Oh, don't think to—

Gripe. I tell thee I will not hang thee.

Brass. But I tell you I will hang you, if you don't give me my necklace. I will, rot me!

Gripe. Speak softly, be wise; how came it thine? who gave it thee?

Brass. A gentleman, a friend of mine.

Gripe. What's his name?

Brass. His name!—I'm in such a passion I have forgot it.

Gripe. Ah, brazen rogue—thou hast stole it from my wife! 'tis the same she lost six weeks ago.

Brass. This has not been in England a month.

Gripe. You are a son of a whore.

Brass. Give me my necklace.

Gripe. Give me my two hundred and fifty pound note.

Brass. Yet I offer peace: one word without passion. The case stands thus, either I'm out of my wits, or you are out of yours: now 'tis plain I am not out of my wits, ergo—

Gripe. My bill, hang-dog, or I'll strangle thee! [They struggle.]

Brass. Murder! murder!

Enter CLARISSA, ARAMINTA, CORINNA, FLIPPANTA, MONEYTRAP, and JESSAMIN.

Flip. What's the matter? what's the matter here?

Gripe. I'll matter him!

Clar. Who makes thee cry out thus, poor Brass?

Brass. Why, your husband, madam, he's in his altitudes here.

Gripe. Robber!

Brass. Here, he has cheated me of a diamond necklace.

Cor. Who, papa? ah, dear me!

Clar. Prithce what's the meaning of this great emotion, my dear?

Gripe. The meaning is that—I'm quite out of breath—this son of a whore has got your necklace, that's all.

Clar. My necklace!

Gripe. That birdlime there—stole it.

Clar. Impossible!

Brass. Madam, you see master's a little—touched, that's all. Twenty ounces of blood let loose would set all right again.

Gripe. Here, call a constable presently.—[Exit JESSAMIN.] Neighbour Moneytrap, you'll commit him?

Brass. D'ye hear? d'ye hear? See how wild

he looks: how his eyes roll in his head! tie him down, or he'll do some mischief or other.

Gripe. Let me come at him.

Clar. Hold!—prithce, my dear, reduce things to a little temperance, and let us coolly into the secret of this disagreeable rupture.

Gripe. Well then, without passion. Why, you must know (but I'll have him hanged,) you must know that he came to Mr. Clip, to Mr. Clip the dog did!—with a necklace to sell; so Mr. Clip having notice before that (can you deny this, sirrah?) that you had lost yours, brings it to me. Look at it here, do you know it again?—Ah, you traitor! [To BRASS.]

Brass. He makes me mad! Here's an appearance of something now to the company, and yet nothing in't in the bottom.

Enter Constable.

Clar. Flippanta!—

[Aside to FLIPPANTA, showing the necklace.]

Flip. 'Tis it, faith; here's some mystery in this, we must look about us.

Clar. The safest way is point blank to disown the necklace.

Flip. Right, stick to that.

Gripe. Well, madam, do you know your old acquaintance, ha?

Clar. Why, truly, my dear, though (as you may all imagine) I should be very glad to recover so valuable a thing as my necklace, yet I must be just to all the world, this necklace is not mine.

Brass. Huzza!—Here, constable, do your duty.—Mr. Justice, I demand my necklace, and satisfaction of him.

Gripe. I'll die before I part with it, I'll keep it, and have him hanged.

Clar. But be a little calm, my dear, do, my bird, and then thou'lt be able to judge rightly of things.

Gripe. O good lack! O good lack!

Clar. No, but don't give way to fury and interest both, either of 'em are passions strong enough to lead a wise man out of the way. The necklace not being really mine, give it the man again, and come drink a dish of tea.

Brass. Ay, madam says right.

Gripe. Oons, if you with your addle head don't know your own jewels, I with my solid one do: and if I part with it, may famine be my portion!

Clar. But don't swear and curse thyself at this fearful rate: don't, my dove. Be temperate in your words, and just in all your actions, 'twill bring a blessing upon you and your family.

Gripe. Bring thunder and lightning upon me and my family, if I part with my necklace!

Clar. Why you'll have the lightning burn your house about your ears, my dear, if you go on in these practices.

Mon. A most excellent woman this! [Aside.]

Enter MRS. AMLET.

Gripe. I'll keep my necklace.

Brass. Will you so? then here comes one has a title to it, if I han't.—[Aside.] Let Dick bring himself off with her as he can.—[Aloud.] Mrs. Amlet, you are come in a very good time; you lost

a necklace t'other day, and who do you think has got it?

Mrs. Aml. Marry that know I not, I wish I did.

Brass. Why then here's Mr. Gripe has it, and swears 'tis his wife's.

Gripe. And so I do, sirrah!—Look here, mistress, do you pretend this is yours?

Mrs. Aml. Not for the round world I would not say it; I only kept it, to do madam a small courtesy, that's all.

Clar. Ah, Flippanta, all will out now!

[*Aside to FLIPPANTA.*]

Gripe. Courtesy! what courtesy?

Mrs. Aml. A little money only that madam had present need of, please to pay me that, and I demand no more.

Brass. So here's fresh game; I have started a new hare, I find.

[*Aside.*]

Gripe. How, forsooth, is this true?

[*To CLARISSA.*]

Clar. You are in a humour at present, love, to believe anything, so I won't take the pains to contradict it.

Brass. This damned necklace will spoil all our affairs, this is Dick's luck again.

[*Aside.*]

Gripe. Are you not ashamed of these ways? Do you see how you are exposed before your best friends here? don't you blush at it?

Clar. I do blush, my dear, but 'tis for you, that here it should appear to the world, you keep me so bare of money, I'm forced to pawn my jewels.

Gripe. Impudent housewife!

[*Raising his hand to strike her.*]

Clar. Softly, chicken; you might have prevented all this by giving me the two hundred and fifty pound you sent to Araminta e'en now.

Brass. You see, sir, I delivered your note. How I have been abused to-day!

Gripe. I'm betrayed!—Jades on both sides, I see that!

[*Aside.*]

Mon. But, madam, madam, is this true I hear? Have you taken a present of two hundred and fifty pound? Pray what were you to return for these pounds, madam, ha?

Aram. Nothing, my dear; I only took 'em to reimburse you of about the same sum you sent to Clarissa.

Mon. Hum, hum, hum!

Gripe. How, gentlewoman, did you receive money from him?

Clar. Oh, my dear, 'twas only in jest; I knew you'd give it again to his wife.

Mrs. Aml. But amongst all this tintamar, I don't hear a word of my hundred pounds. Is it madam will pay me, or master?

Gripe. I pay! the devil shall pay!

Clar. Look you, my dear, malice apart, pay Mrs. Amlet her money, and I'll forgive you the wrong you intended my bed with Araminta. Am not I a good wife now?

Gripe. I burst with rage, and will get rid of this noose, though I tuck myself up in another.

Mon. Nay, pray, e'en tuck me up with you.

[*Exeunt MONEYTRAP and GRIPES.*]

Clar. and Aram. Bye, dearies!

Enter DICK AMLET.

Cor. Look, look, Flippanta, here's the colonel come at last!

Dick. Ladies, I ask your pardon, I have stayed so long, but—

Mrs. Aml. Ah, rogue's face, have I got thee, old Good-for-nought? Sirrah, sirrah, do you think to amuse me with your marriages, and your great fortunes? Thou hast played me a rare prank, by my conscience! Why, you ungracious rascal, what do you think will be the end of all this? Now Heaven forgive me, but I have a great mind to hang thee for't.

Cor. She talks to him very familiarly, Flippanta!

Flip. So methinks, by my faith!

Brass. Now the rogue's star is making an end of him.

[*Aside.*]

Dick. What shall I do with her?

[*Aside.*]

Mrs. Aml. Do but look at him, my dames: he has the countenance of a cherubim, but he's a rogue in his heart.

Clar. What is the meaning of all this, Mrs. Amlet?

Mrs. Aml. The meaning, good lack! Why this all-to-be-powdered rascal here is my son, an't please you.—Ha, Graceless! Now I'll make you own your mother, vermin!

Clar. What, the colonel your son?

Mrs. Aml. 'Tis Dick, madam, that rogue Dick I have so often told you of, with tears trickling down my old cheeks.

Aram. The woman's mad, it can never be.

Mrs. Aml. Speak, rogue, am I not thy mother, ha? Did I not bring thee forth? say then.

Dick. What will you have me say? you had a mind to ruin me, and you have done't; would you do any more.

Clar. Then, sir, you are son to good Mrs. Amlet?

Aram. And have had the assurance to put upon us all this while!

Flip. And the confidence to think of marrying Corinna?

Brass. And the impudence to hire me for your servant, who am as well born as yourself?

Clar. Indeed I think he should be corrected.

Aram. Indeed I think he deserves to be cudgelled.

Flip. Indeed I think he might be pumped.

Brass. Indeed I think he will be hanged.

Mrs. Aml. Good lack a-day! Good lack a-day! there's no need to be so smart upon him neither: if he is not a gentleman, he's a gentleman's fellow.—Come hither, Dick, they shan't run thee down neither; cock up thy hat, Dick, and tell 'em, though Mrs. Amlet is thy mother, she can make thee amends with ten thousand good pounds to buy thee some lands, and build thee a house in the midst on't.

All. How!

Clar. Ten thousand pounds, Mrs. Amlet!

Mrs. Aml. Yes forsooth, though I should lose the hundred you pawned your necklace for.—Tell 'em of that, Dick.

Cor. Look you, Flippanta, I can hold no longer, and I hate to see the young man abused.—And so, sir, if you please, I'm your friend and servant, and what's mine is yours; and when our estates are put together, I don't doubt but we shall do as well as the best of 'em.

Dick. Sayest thou so, my little queen? Why then if dear mother will give us her blessing, the parson shall give us a tack. We'll get her a score of grandchildren, and a merry house we'll make her.

[*They kneel to Mrs. AMLET.*]

Mrs. Am. Ah—ha! ha! ha! ha! the pretty pair, the pretty pair! Rise my chickens, rise, rise and face the proudest of 'em. And if madam does not deign to give her consent, a fig for her, Dick!—Why, how now?

Clar. Pray, Mrs. Amlet, don't be in a passion, the girl is my husband's girl, and if you can have

his consent, upon my word you shall have mine, for anything belongs to him.

Flip. Then all's peace again, but we have been more lucky than wise.

Aram. And I suppose for us, Clarissa, we are to go on with our dears, as we used to do.

Clar. Just in the same tract, for this late treaty of agreement with 'em was so unnatural you see it could not hold. But 'tis just as well with us as if it had. Well, 'tis a strange fate, good folks! But while you live, everything gets well out of a broil but a husband.

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

EPILOGUE.

SPOKEN BY MRS. BARRY.

I've heard wise men in politics lay down
What feats by little England might be done,
Were all agreed, and all would act as one.
Ye wives a useful hint from this might take,
The heavy, old, despotic kingdom shake,
And make your matrimonial monsieurs quake.
Our heads are feeble, and we're cramp'd by laws;
Our hands are weak, and not too strong our cause:
Yet would those heads and hands, such as they are,
In firm confederacy resolve on war,
You'd find your tyrants—what I've found my dear.
What only two united can produce
You've seen to-night, a sample for your use:
Single, we found we nothing could obtain;
We join our force—and we subdued our men.
Believe me (my dear sex) they are not brave;
Try each your man; you'll quickly find your slave.

I know they'll make campaigns, risk blood and life;
But this is a more terrifying strife;
They'll stand a shot, who'll tremble at a wife.
Beat then your drums, and your shrill trumpets
sound,
Let all your visits of your feats resound,
And deeds of war in cups of tea go round:
The stars are with you, fate is in your hand,
In twelve months' time you've vanquish'd half the
land;
Be wise, and keep 'em under good command.
This year will to your glory long be known,
And deathless ballads hand your triumphs down;
Your late achievements ever will remain,
For though you cannot boast of many slain,
Your prisoners show you've made a brave cam-
paign.

THE MISTAKE.

A Comedy.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

DON ALVAREZ, *Father to LEONORA.*
DON FELIX, *Father to DON LORENZO.*
DON CARLOS, *in love with LEONORA.*
DON LORENZO, *in love with LEONORA.*
METAPHRASTUS, *Tutor to CAMILLO.*
SANCHO, *Servant to DON CARLOS.*
LOPEZ, *Servant to DON LORENZO.*

TOLEDO, *a Bravo.*

LEONORA, *Daughter to DON ALVAREZ.*
CAMILLO, *supposed Son to DON ALVAREZ.*
ISABELLA, *her Friend.*
JACINTA, *Servant to LEONORA.*

SCENE,—A TOWN IN SPAIN.

PROLOGUE.

(WRITTEN BY MR. STEELE) SPOKEN BY MR. BOOTH.

OUR author's wit and railery to-night
Perhaps might please, but that your stage-delight
No more is in your minds, but ears and sight.
With audiences composed of belles and beaux,
The first dramatic rule is, have good clothes.
To charm the gay spectator's gentle breast,
In lace and feather tragedy's express'd,
And heroes die unpitied, if ill dress'd.

The other style you full as well advance;
If 'tis a comedy, you ask—Who dance?
For oh! what dire convulsions have of late
Torn and distracted each dramatic state,
On this great question, which house first should
sell

The new French steps, imported by Ruel?
Desbarques can't rise so high, we must agree,
They've half a foot in height more wit than we.
But though the genius of our learned age
Thinks fit to dance and sing quite off the stage.
True action, comic mirth, and tragic rage;
Yet as your taste now stands, our author draws

Some hopes of your indulgence and applause.

For that great end this edifice he made,
Where humble swain at lady's feet is laid;
Where the pleased nymph her conquer'd lover
spies,

Then to glass pillars turns her conscious eyes,
And points anew each charm, for which he dies.

The Muse, before nor terrible nor great,
Enjoys by him this awful gilded seat:
By him theatric angels mount more high,
And mimic thunders shake a broader sky.

Thus all must own, our author has done more,
For your delight than ever bard before.
His thoughts are still to raise your pleasures fill'd
To write, translate, to blazon, or to build.
Then take him in the lump, nor nicely pry
Into small faults, that 'scape a busy eye;
But kindly, sirs, consider, he to-day
Finds you the house, the actors, and the play:
So, though we stage-mechanic rules omit,
You must allow it in a wholesale wit.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—A Street.

Enter DON CARLOS and SANCHO.

Don Car. I tell thee, I am not satisfied; I'm
in love enough to be suspicious of everybody.

San. And yet methinks, sir, you should leave
me out.

Don Car. It may be so, I can't tell; but I'm
not at ease. If they don't make a knave, at least
they'll make a fool of thee.

San. I don't believe a word on't. But good
faith, master, your love makes somewhat of you:
I don't know what 'tis, but methinks when you
suspect me, you don't seem a man of half those
parts I used to take you for. Look in my face,
'tis round and comely, not one hollow line of a
villain in it. Men of my fabric don't use to be
suspected for knaves; and when you take us for
fools, we never take you for wise men. For my
part, in this present case, I take myself to be

mighty deep. A stander-by, sir, sees more than a gamester. You are pleased to be jealous of your poor mistress without a cause. She uses you but too well, in my humble opinion. She sees you, and talks with you, till I am quite tired on't sometimes; and your rival, that you are so scared about, forces a visit upon her about once in a fortnight.

Don Car. Alas! thou art ignorant in these affairs: he that's the civilest received is often the least cared for. Women appear warm to one, to hide a flame for another. Lorenzo, in short, appears too composed of late to be a rejected lover; and the indifference he shows upon the favours I seem to receive from her, poisons the pleasure I else should taste in 'em, and keeps me on a perpetual rack. No! I would fain see some of his jealous transports; have him fire at the sight o' me, contradict me whenever I speak, affront me wherever he meets me, challenge me, fight me—

San. Run you through the guts.

Don Car. But he's too calm, his heart's too much at ease, to leave me mine at rest.

San. But, sir, you forget that there are two ways for our hearts to get at ease: when our mistresses come to be very fond of us, or we, not to care a fig for them. Now suppose, upon the rebukes you know he has had, it should chance to be the latter.

Don Car. Again thy ignorance appears. Alas! a lover who has broke his chain will shun the tyrant that enslaved him. Indifference never is his lot; he loves or hates for ever; and if his mistress prove another's prize, he cannot calmly see her in his arms.

San. For my part, master, I'm not so great a philosopher as you be, nor (thank my stars) so bitter a lover, but what I see—that I generally believe; and when Jacinta tells me she loves me dearly, I have good thoughts enough of my person never to doubt the truth on't. See, here the baggage comes.

Enter JACINTA with a letter.

Hist, Jacinta, my dear!

Jac. Who's that? Blunderbuss! Where's your master?

San. Hard by. [*Pointing to DON CARLOS.*]

Jac. O, sir! I'm glad I have found you at last; I believe I have travelled five miles after you, and could neither find you at home, nor in the walks, nor at church, nor at the opera, nor—

San. Nor anywhere else, where he was not to be found. If you had looked for him where he was, 'twas ten to one but you had met with him.

Jac. I had, Jack-a-dandy!

Don Car. But, prithee, what's the matter? who sent you after me?

Jac. One who's never well but when she sees you, I think; 'twas my lady.

Don Car. Dear Jacinta, I fain would flatter myself, but am not able; the blessing's too great to be my lot. Yet 'tis not well to trifle with me: how short soe'er I am in other merit, the tenderness I have for Leonora claims something from her generosity. I should not be deluded.

Jac. And why do you think you are? methinks she's pretty well above-board with you. What must be done now to satisfy you?

San. Why, Lorenzo must hang himself, and then we are content.

Jac. How! Lorenzo!

San. If less will do, he'll tell you.

Jac. Why, you are not mad, sir, are you? Jealous of him! Pray which way may this have got into your head? I took you for a man of sense before.—[*To SANCHO.*] Is this your doings, Log?

San. No, forsooth, Pert! I'm not much given to suspicion, as you can tell, Mrs. Forward: if I were, I might find more cause, I guess, than your mistress has given our master here. But I have so many pretty thoughts of my own person, housewife, more than I have of yours, that I stand in dread of no man.

Jac. That's the way to prosper; however, so far I'll confess the truth to thee; at least, if that don't do, nothing else will. Men are mighty simple in love-matters, sir. When you suspect a woman's falling off, you fall a-plaguin' her to bring her on again, attack her with reason, and a sour face. Udsife, sir! attack her with a fiddle, double your good-humour; give her a ball—powder your periwig at her—let her cheat you at cards a little—and I'll warrant all's right again. But to come upon a poor woman with the gloomy face of jealousy, before she gives the least occasion for't, is to set a complaisant rival in too favourable a light. Sir, sir! I must tell you, I have seen those have owed their success to nothing else.

Don Car. Say no more, I have been to blame; but there shall be no more on't.

Jac. I should punish you but justly, however, for what's past, if I carried back what I have brought you; but I'm good-natured, so here 'tis; open it, and see how wrong you timed your jealousy!

Don Car. [*Reads.*] *If you love me with that tenderness you have made me long believe you do, this letter will be welcome: 'tis to tell you, you have leave to plead a daughter's weakness to a father's indulgence: and if you prevail with him to lay his commands upon me, you shall be as happy as my obedience to 'em can make you.*

LEONORA.

Then I shall be what man was never yet.—[*Kissing the letter.*] Ten thousand blessings on thee for thy news!—I could adore thee as a deity!

[*Embracing JACINTA.*]

San. True flesh and blood, every inch of her, for all that.

Don Car. [*Reads again.*] *And if you prevail with him to lay his commands upon me, you shall be as happy as my obedience to 'em can make you.*

—O happy, happy Carlos!—But what shall I say to thee for this welcome message? Alas! I want words.—But let this speak for me, and this, and—

[*Giving her his ring, watch, and purse.*]

San. Hold, sir; pray leave a little something for our board-wages.—[*To JACINTA.*] You can't carry 'em all, I believe: shall I ease thee of this?

[*Offering to take the purse.*]

Jac. No; but you may carry—that, sirrah.

[*Giving him a box on the ear.*]

San. The jade's grown purse-proud already.

Don Car. Well, dear Jacinta, say something to your charming mistress, that I am not able to say myself: but above all, excuse my late unpardonable folly, and offer her my life to expiate my crime.

Jac. The best plea for pardon will be never to repeat the fault.

Don Car. If that will do, 'tis sealed for ever.

Jac. Enough. But I must begone; success attend you with the old gentleman. Good-bye t'ye, sir.

Don Car. Eternal blessings follow thee!

[*Exit JACINTA.*]

San. I think she has taken 'em all with her; the jade has got her apron full.

Don Car. Is not that Lorenzo coming this way?

San. Yes, 'tis he; for my part now I pity the poor gentleman.

[*Enter DON LORENZO.*]

Don Car. I'll let him see at last I can be cheerful too.—Your servant, Don Lorenzo; how do you do this morning?

Don Lor. I thank you, Don Carlos, perfectly well, both in body and in mind.

Don Car. What! cured of your love then?

Don Lor. No, nor I hope I never shall. May I ask you how 'tis with yours?

Don Car. Increasing every hour; we are very constant both.

Don Lor. I find so much delight in being so I hope I never shall be otherwise.

Don Car. Those joys I am well acquainted with, but should lose 'em soon were I to meet a cool reception.

Don Lor. That's every generous lover's case, no doubt; an angel could not fire my heart but with an equal flame.

Don Car. And yet you said you still loved Leonora.

Don Lor. And yet I said I loved her.

Don Car. Does she then return you—

Don Lor. Everything my passion can require.

Don Car. Its wants are small, I find.

Don Lor. Extended as the heavens.

Don Car. I pity you.

Don Lor. He must be a deity that does so.

Don Car. Yet I'm a mortal, and once more can pity you.

Alas! Lorenzo,

'Tis a poor cordial to an aching heart,

To have the tongue alone announce it happy:

Besides 'tis mean, you should be more a man.

Don Lor. I find I have made you an unhappy one, So can forgive the boillings of your spleen.

Don Car. This seeming calmness might have the effect your vanity proposes by it, had I not a testimony of her love would (should I show it) sink you to the centre.

Don Lor. Yet still I'm calm as ever.

Don Car. Nay, then have at your peace. Read that, and end the farce. [*Gives him LEONORA's letter.*]

Don Lor. [*After reading.*] I have read it.

Don Car. And know the hand?

Don Lor. 'Tis Leonora's; I have often seen it.

Don Car. I hope you then at last are satisfied.

Don Lor. [*Smiling.*] I am. Good morrow, Carlos!

[*Exit.*]

San. Sure he's mad, master.

Don Car. Mad! sayest thou?

San. And yet, by'r Lady, that was a sort of a dry sober smile at going off.

Don Car. A very sober one! Had he show me such a letter, I had put on another countenance.

San. Ay, o' my conscience had you.

Don Car. Here's mystery in this—I like it not.

San. I see his man and confidant there, Lopez.

Shall I draw him on a Scotch pair of boots, master, and make him tell all?

Don Car. Some questions I must ask him; call him hither.

San. Hem, Lopez, hem!

[*Enter LOPEZ.*]

Lop. Who calls?

San. I and my master.

Lop. I can't stay.

San. You can indeed, sir. [*Laying hold on him.*]

Don Car. Whither in such haste, honest Lopez? What! upon some love-errand?

Lop. Sir, your servant; I ask your pardon, but I was going—

Don Car. I guess where; but you need not be shy of me any more, thy master and I are no longer rivals; I have yielded up the cause; the lady will have it so, so I submit.

Lop. Is it possible, sir? Shall I then live to see my master and you friends again?

San. Yes; and what's better, thou and I shall be friends too. There will be no more fear of Christian bloodshed, I give thee up, Jacinta; she's a slippery housewife, so master and I are going to match ourselves elsewhere.

Lop. But is it possible, sir, your honour should be in earnest? I'm afraid you are pleased to be merry with your poor humble servant.

Don Car. I'm not at present much disposed to mirth, my indifference in this matter is not so thoroughly formed; but my reason has so far mastered my passion, to show me 'tis in vain to pursue a woman whose heart already is another's. 'Tis what I have so plainly seen of late, I have roused my resolution to my aid, and broke my chains for ever.

Lop. Well, sir, to be plain with you, this is the joyfullest news I have heard this long time; for I always knew you to be a mighty honest gentleman, and good faith it often went to the heart o' me to see you so abused. Dear, dear, have I often said to myself (when they have had a private meeting just after you have been gone)—

Don Car. Ha!

San. Hold, master, don't kill him yet.

[*Aside to DON CARLOS.*]

Lop. I say I have said to myself, what wicked things are women, and what pity it is they should be suffered in a Christian country! what a shame they should be allowed to play will-in-the-wisp with men of honour, and lead them through thorns and briars, and rocks, and rugged ways, till their hearts are torn in pieces, like an old coat in a fox-chase! I say, I have said to myself—

Don Car. Thou hast said enough to thyself, but say a little more to me. Where were these secret meetings thou talkest of?

Lop. In sundry places, and by divers ways; sometimes in the cellar, sometimes in the garret, sometimes in the court, sometimes in the gutter; but the place where the kiss of kisses was given was—

Don Car. In hell!

Lop. Sir!

Don Car. Speak, fury, what dost thou mean by the kiss of kisses?

Lop. The kiss of peace, sir; the kiss of union; the kiss of consummation.

Don Car. Thou liest, villain !

Lop. I don't know but I may, sir.—[*Aside.*]
What the devil's the matter now !

Don Car. There's not one word of truth in all thy cursed tongue has uttered.

Lop. No, sir, I—I—believe there is not.

Don Car. Why then didst thou say it, wretch ?

Lop. Oh—only in jest, sir.

Don Car. I am not in a jesting condition.

Lop. Nor I—at present, sir.

Don Car. Speak then the truth, as thou wouldst do it at the hour of death.

Lop. Yes, at the gallows, and be turned off as soon as I've done. [*Aside.*]

Don Car. What's that you murmur ?

Lop. Nothing but a short prayer.

Don Car. [*Aside.*] I am distracted, and fright the wretch from telling me what I am upon the rack to know.—[*Aloud.*] Forgive me, Lopez, I am to blame to speak thus harshly to thee. Let this obtain thy pardon.—[*Gives him money.*] Thou seest I am disturbed.

Lop. Yes, sir, I see I have been led into a snare ; I have said too much.

Don Car. And yet thou must say more ; nothing can lessen my torment but a farther knowledge of what causes my misery. Speak then ! have I anything to hope ?

Lop. Nothing ; but that you may be a happier bachelor than my master may probably be a married man.

Don Car. Married, sayest thou ?

Lop. I did, sir, and I believe he'll say so too in a twelvemonth.

Don Car. O torment !—But give me more on't : when, how, to who, where ?

Lop. Yesterday, to Leonora, by the parson in the pantry.

Don Car. Look to't, if this be false, thy life shall pay the torment thou hast given me. Begone !

Lop. With the body and the soul o'me. [*Exit.*]

San. Base news, master.

Don Car. Now my insulting rival's smile speaks out : O cursed, cursed woman !

Re-enter JACINTA.

Jac. I'm come in haste to tell you, sir, that as soon as the moon's up, my lady'll give you a meeting in the close-walk by the back-door of the garden ; she thinks she has something to propose to you will certainly get her father's consent to marry you.

Don Car. Past sufferance !

This aggravation is not to be borne.

Go, thank her—with my curses. Fly !—

And let 'em blast her, while their venom's strong. [*Exit.*]

Jac. Won't thou explain ? What's this storm for ?

San. And darest thou ask me questions, smooth-faced iniquity, crocodile of Nile, siren of the rocks ! Go, carry back the too gentle answer thou hast received ; only let me add with the poet :—
We are no fools, trollop, my master, nor me ;
And thy mistress may go—to the devil with thee. [*Exit.*]

Jac. Am I awake !—I fancy not ; a very idle dream this. Well : I'll go talk in my sleep to my lady about it ; and when I awake, we'll try what interpretation we can make on't. [*Exit.*]

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*An open court near the House of DON ALVAREZ.*

Enter CAMILLO and ISABELLA.

Isab. How can you doubt my secrecy ? have you not proofs of it ?

Cam. Nay, I am determined to trust you ; but are we safe here ? can nobody overhear us ?

Isab. Safer much than in a room. Nobody can come within hearing before we see 'em.

Cam. And yet how hard 'tis for me to break silence !

Isab. Your secret sure must be of great importance.

Cam. You may be sure it is, when I confess 'tis with regret I own it e'en to you ; and, were it possible, you should not know it.

Isab. 'Tis frankly owned indeed ; but 'tis not kind, perhaps not prudent, after what you know I already am acquainted with. Have I not been bred up with you ? and am I ignorant of a secret which, were it known—

Cam. Would be my ruin ; I confess it would. I own you know why both my birth and sex are thus disguised ; you know how I was taken from my cradle to secure the estate which had else been lost by young Camillo's death ; but which is now safe in my supposed father's hands, by my passing for his son ; and 'tis because you know all this, I have resolved to open farther wonders to you. But,

before I say any more, you must resolve one doubt, which often gives me great disturbance ; whether Don Alvarez ever was himself privy to the mystery which has disguised my sex, and made me pass for his son ?

Isab. What you ask me is a thing has often perplexed my thoughts as well as yours, nor could my mother ever resolve the doubt. You know when that young child Camillo died, in whom was wrapped up so much expectation, from the great estate his uncle's will (even before he came into the world) had left him ; his mother made a secret of his death to her husband Alvarez, and readily fell in with a proposal made her to take you (who then were just Camillo's age) and bring you up in his room. You have heard how you were then at nurse with my mother, and how your own was privy and consenting to the plot ; but Don Alvarez was never let into it by 'em.

Cam. Don't you then think it probable his wife might after tell him ?

Isab. 'Twas ever thought nothing but a death-bed repentance could draw it from her to any one ; and that was prevented by the suddenness of her exit to 't'other world, which did not give her even time to call Heaven's mercy on her. And yet, now I have said all this, I own the correspondence and friendship I observe he holds with your real mother gives me some suspicion, and the presents he often makes her (which people seldom do for

nothing) confirm it. But, since this is all I can say to you on that point, pray let us come to the secret, which you have made me impatient to hear.

Cam. Know, then, that though Cupid is blind, he is not to be deceived: I can hide my sex from the world, but not from him; his dart has found the way through the manly garb I wear, to pierce a virgin's tender heart.—I love—

Isab. How!

Cam. Nay, ben't surprised at that, I have other wonders for you.

Isab. Quick, let me hear 'em.

Cam. I love Lorenzo.

Isab. Lorenzo! Most nicely hit! The very man from whom your imposture keeps this vast estate; and who, on the first knowledge of your being a woman, would enter into possession of it. This is indeed a wonder.

Cam. Then, wonder farther still, I am his wife.

Isab. Ha! his wife!

Isab. His wife, Isabella; and yet thou hast not all my wonders, I am his wife without his knowledge: he does not even know I am a woman.

Isab. Madam, your humble servant; if you please to go on, I won't interrupt you, indeed I won't.

Cam. Then hear how these strange things have passed: Lorenzo, bound unregarded in my sister's chains, seemed in my eyes a conquest worth her care. Nor could I see him treated with contempt without growing warm in his interest: I blamed Leonora for not being touched with his merit; I blamed her so long, till I grew touched with it myself: and the reasons I urged to vanquish her heart insensibly made a conquest of my own. 'Twas thus, my friend, I fell. What was next to be done my passion pointed out; my heart I felt was warmed to a noble enterprise, I gave it way, and boldly on it led me. Leonora's name and voice, in the dark shades of night, I borrowed, to engage the object of my wishes. I met him, Isabella, and so deceived him; he cannot blame me sure, for much I blessed him. But to finish this strange story: in short, I owned I long had loved; out, finding my father most averse to my desires, I at last had forced myself to this secret correspondence;

I urged the mischiefs would attend the knowledge on't,

I urged 'em so, he thought 'em full of weight,
So yielded to observe what rules I gave him.
They were, to pass the day with cold indifference,
To avoid even sign or looks of intimacy,
But gather for the still, the secret night,
A flood of love

To recompense the losses of the day.

I will not trouble you with lovers' cares,
Nor what contrivances we form'd to bring
This toying to a solid bliss.

Know only, when three nights we thus had pass'd,
The fourth

It was agreed should make us one for ever;
Each kept their promise, and last night has join'd us.

Isab. Indeed your talents pass my poor extent;
You serious ladies are well form'd for business.

What wretched work a poor coquette had made on't!

But still there's that remains will try your skill;
You have your man, but—

Cam.

Lovers think no farther.
The object of that passion possesses all desire.
However, I have opened to you my wondrous situation, if you can advise me in my difficulties to come, you will. But see—my husband!

Enter DON LORENZO.

Don Lor. You look as if you were busy; pray tell me if I interrupt you; I'll retire.

Cam. No, no, you have a right to interrupt us, since you were the subject of our discourse.

Don Lor. Was I?

Cam. You were; nay, I'll tell you how you entertained us too.

Don Lor. Perhaps I had as good avoid hearing that.

Cam. You need not fear, it was not to your disadvantage; I was commending you, and saying, if I had been a woman, I had been in danger; nay I think I said I should infallibly have been in love with you.

Don Lor. While such an if is in the way, you run no great risk in declaring; but you'd be finely caught now, should some wonderful transformation give me a claim to your heart.

Cam. Not sorry for't at all, for I ne'er expect to find a mistress please me half so well as you would do, if I were yours.

Don Lor. Since you are so well inclined to me in your wishes, sir, I suppose (as the fates have ordained it) you would have some pleasure in helping me to a mistress, since you can't be mine yourself.

Cam. Indeed I should not.

Don Lor. Then my obligation is but small to you.

Cam. Why, would you have a woman, that is in love with you herself, employ her interest to help you to another?

Don Lor. No, but you being no woman might.

Cam. Sir, 'tis as a woman I say what I do, and I suppose myself a woman when I design all these favours to you. Therefore, out of that supposition, I have no other good intentions to you than you may expect from any one that says, he's—sir, your humble servant.

Don Lor. So, unless Heaven is pleased to work a miracle, and from a sturdy young fellow make you a kind-hearted young lady, I'm to get little by your good opinion of me.

Cam. Yes, there is one means yet left (on this side a miracle) that would perhaps engage me, if with an honest oath you could declare, were I woman, I might dispute your heart, even with the first of my pretending sex.

Don Lor. Then solemnly and honestly I swear, that had you been a woman, and I the master of the world, I think I should have laid it at your feet.

Cam. Then honestly and solemnly I swear, henceforwards all your interest shall be mine.

Don Lor. I have a secret to impart to you will quickly try your friendship.

Cam. I have a secret to unfold to you will put you even to a fiery trial.

Don Lor. What do you mean, Camillo?

Cam. I mean that I love where I never durst yet own it, yet where 'tis in your power to make me the happiest of—

Don Lor. Explain, Camillo; and be assured, if your happiness is in my power, 'tis in your own.

Cam. Alas ! you promise me you know not what.

Don Lor. I promise nothing but what I will perform ; name the person.

Cam. 'Tis one who's very near to you.

Don Lor. If 'tis my sister, why all this pain in bringing forth the secret ?

Cam. Alas ! it is you—

Don Lor. Speak !

Cam. I cannot yet ; farewell !

Don Lor. Hold ! pray speak it now.

Cam. I must not : but when you tell me your secret, you shall know mine.

Don Lor. Mine is not in my power, without the consent of another.

Cam. Get that consent, and then we'll try who best will keep their oaths.

Don Lor. I am content.

Cam. And I. Adieu !

Don Lor. Farewell.

[Exit.

Enter LEONORA and JACINTA.

Leo. 'Tis enough : I will revenge myself this way, if it does but torment him. I shall be content to find no other pleasure in it.—Brother, you'll wonder at my change ; after all my ill usage of Lorenzo, I am determined to be his wife.

Cam. How, sister ! so sudden a turn ? This inequality of temper indeed is not commendable.

Leo. Your change, brother, is much more justly surprising ; you hitherto have pleaded for him strongly ; accused me of blindness, cruelty, and pride ; and now I yield to your reasons, and resolve in his favour, you blame my compliance, and appear against his interest.

Cam. I quit his service for what's dearer to me, yours. I have learned from sure intelligence, the attack he made on you was but a feint, and that his heart is in another's chain : I would not therefore see you so exposed, to offer up yourself to one who must refuse you.

Leo. If that be all, leave me my honour to take care of ; I am no stranger to his wishes ; he won't refuse me, brother, nor I hope will you, to tell him of my resolution : if you do, this moment with my own tongue (through all a virgin's blushes) I'll own to him I am determined in his favour.—You pause as if you'd let the task lie on me.

Cam. Neither on you, nor me ; I have a reason you are yet a stranger to.

Know then there is a virgin young and tender,
Whose peace and happiness so much are mine,
I cannot see her miserable ;
She loves him with that torrent of desire,
That were the world resign'd her in his stead,
She'd still be wretched.
I will not pique you to a female strife,
By saying you have not charms to tear him from her ;

But I would move you to a female softness,
By telling you her death would wait your conquest.
What I have more to plead is as a brother,
What that gives me some small interest in you ;
I hate'er it is, you see how I'd employ it.

Leo. You ne'er could put it to a harder service. I beg a little time to think : pray leave me to myself a while.

Cam. I shall ; I only ask that you would think, And then you won't refuse me.

[Exit CAMILLO and ISABELLA.

Jac. Indeed, madam, I'm of your brother's mind,

though for another cause ; but sure 'tis worth thinking twice on for your own sake. You are too violent.

Leo. A slighted woman knows no bounds. Vengeance is all the cordial she can have, so snatches at the nearest. Ungrateful wretch ! to use me with such insolence.

Jac. You see me as much enraged at it as you are yourself, yet my brain is roving after the cause, for something there must be ; never letter was received by man with more passion and transport ; I was almost as charming a goddess as yourself, only for bringing it. Yet when in a moment after I come with a message worth a dozen on't, never was witch so handled ; something must have passed between one and t'other, that's sure.

Leo. Nothing could pass worth my inquiring after, since nothing could happen that can excuse his usage of me ; he had a letter under my hand which owned him master of my heart ; and till I contradicted it with my mouth he ought not to doubt the truth on't.

Jac. Nay, I confess, madam, I han't a word to say for him, I'm afraid he's but a rogue at bottom, as well as my Shameless that attends him ; we are bit, by my troth, and haply well enough served, for listening to the glib tongues of the rascals. But be comforted, madam ; they'll fall into the hands of some foul sluts or other, before they die, that will set our account even with 'em.

Leo. Well, let him laugh ; let him glory in what he has done : he shall see I have a spirit can use him as I ought.

Jac. And let one thing be your comfort by the way, madam, that in spite of all your dear affections to him, you have had the grace to keep him at arm's end. You han't thanked me for't ; but good faith 'twas well I did not stir out of the chamber that fond night. For there are times the stoutest of us are in danger, the rascals wheedle so.

Leo. In short my very soul is fired with his treatment : and if ever that perfidious monster should relent, though he should crawl like a poor worm beneath my feet, nay, plunge a dagger in his heart, to bleed for pardon ; I charge thee strictly, charge thee on thy life, thou do not urge a look to melt me toward him, but strongly buoy me up in brave resentment ; and if thou seest (which Heavens avert !) a glance of weakness in me, rouse to my memory the vile wrongs I've borne, and blazon them with skill in all their glaring colours.

Jac. Madam, never doubt me ; I'm charged to the mouth with fury, and if ever I meet that fat traitor of mine, such a volley will I pour about his ears !—Now Heaven prevent all hasty vows ; but in the humour I am, methinks I'd carry my maiden-head to my cold grave with me, before I'd let it simper at the rascal. But soft ! here comes your father.

Enter DON ALVAREZ.

Don Alv. Leonora, I'd have you retire a little, and send your brother's tutor to me, Metaphrastus.—[Exit LEONORA and JACINTA.] I'll try if I can discover, by his tutor, what 'tis that seems so much to work his brain of late ; for something more than common there plainly does appear, yet nothing sure that can disturb his soul, like what I have to torture mine on his account. Sure nothing in this world is worth a troubled mind ! What racks has avarice stretched me on ! I wanted

nothing : kind Heaven had given me a plenteous lot, and seated me in great abundance. Why then approve I of this imposture ? What have I gained by it ? Wealth and misery. I have bartered peaceful days for restless nights ; a wretched bargain ! and he that merchandises thus must be undone at last.

Enter METAPHRASTUS.

Metaph. *Mandatum tuum curo diligenter.*

Don Alv. Master, I had a mind to ask you—

Metaph. The title, master, comes from *magis* and *ter*, which is as much as to say, *thrice worthy*.

Don Alv. I never heard so much before, but it may be true for aught I know. But, master—

Metaph. Go on.

Don Alv. Why so I will if you'll let me, but don't interrupt me then.

Metaph. Enough, proceed.

Don Alv. Why then, master, for the third time, my son Camillo gives me much uneasiness of late ; you know I love him, and have many careful thoughts about him.

Metaph. 'Tis true. *Filio non potest præferri, nisi filius.*

Don Alv. Master, when one has business to talk on, these scholastic expressions are not of use ; I believe you a great Latinist ; possibly you may understand Greek ; those who recommended you to me, said so, and I am willing it should be true : but the thing I want to discourse you about at present, does not properly give you an occasion to display your learning. Besides, to tell you truth, 'twill at all times be lost upon me ; my father was a wise man, but he taught me nothing beyond common sense ; I know but one tongue in the world, which luckily being understood by you as well as me, I fancy whatever thoughts we have to communicate to one another, may reasonably be conveyed in that, without having recourse to the language of Julius Cæsar.

Metaph. You are wrong, but may proceed.

Don Alv. I thank you. What is the matter I do not know ; but though it is of the utmost consequence to me to marry my son, what match soever I propose to him, he still finds some pretence or other to decline it.

Metaph. He is, perhaps, of the humour of a brother of Marcus Tullius, who—

Don Alv. Dear master, leave the Greeks and the Latins, and the Scotch and the Welsh, and let me go on in my business ; what have those people to do with my son's marriage ?

Metaph. Again you are wrong ; but go on.

Don Alv. I say then, that I have strong apprehensions, from his refusing all my proposals, that he may have some secret inclination of his own ; and to confirm me in this fear, I yesterday observed him (without his knowing it) in a corner of the grove where nobody comes—

Metaph. A place out of the way, you would say ; a place of retreat.

Don Alv. Why, the corner of the grove, where nobody comes, is a place of retreat, is it not ?

Metaph. In Latin, *secessus*.

Don Alv. Ha !

Metaph. As Virgil has it, *Est in secessu locus*.

Don Alv. How could Virgil have it, when I tell you no soul was there but he and I ?

Metaph. Virgil is a famous author ; I quote his saying as a phrase more proper to the occasion than

that you use, and not as one who was in the wood with you.

Don Alv. And I tell you, I hope to be as famous as any Virgil of 'em all, when I have been dead as long, and have no need of a better phrase than my own to tell you my meaning.

Metaph. You ought however to make choice of the words most used by the best authors. *Tu vivendo bonos, as they say, scribendo sequere peritos.*

Don Alv. Again !

Metaph. 'Tis Quintilian's own precept.

Don Alv. Oons !

Metaph. And he has something very learned upon it, that may be of service to you to hear.

Don Alv. You son of a whore, will you hear me speak ?

Metaph. What may be the occasion of this unmanly passion ? What is it you would have with me ?

Don Alv. What you might have known an hour ago, if you had pleased.

Metaph. You would then have me hold my peace—I shall.

Don Alv. You will do very well.

Metaph. You see I do ; well, go on.

Don Alv. Why then, to begin once again, I say my son Camillo—

Metaph. Proceed ; I shan't interrupt you.

Don Alv. I say, my son Camillo—

Metaph. What is it you say of your son Camillo ?

Don Alv. That he has got a dog of a tutor, whose brains I'll beat out if he won't hear me speak.

Metaph. That dog is a philosopher, contemns passion, and yet will hear you.

Don Alv. I don't believe a word on't, but I'll try once again. I have a mind to know from you, whether you have observed anything in my son—

Metaph. Nothing that is like his father. Go on.

Don Alv. Have a care !

Metaph. I do not interrupt you ; but you are long in coming to a conclusion.

Don Alv. Why, thou hast not let me begin yet !

Metaph. And yet it is high time to have made an end.

Don Alv. Dost thou know thy danger ? I have not—thus much patience left.

[Showing the end of his finger.

Metaph. Mine is already consumed. I do not use to be thus treated ; my profession is to teach, and not to hear, yet I have hearkened like a school-boy, and am not heard, although a master.

Don Alv. Get out of the room !

Metaph. I will not. If the mouth of a wise man be shut, he is, as it were, a fool ; for who shall know his understanding ? Therefore a certain philosopher said well, Speak, that thou mayest be known ; great talkers, without knowledge, are as the winds that whistle ; but they who have learning should speak aloud. If this be not permitted, we may expect to see the whole order of nature o'erthrown ; hens devour foxes, and lambs destroy wolves, nurses suck children, and children give suck ; generals mend stockings, and chambermaids take towns ; we may expect, I say—

Don Alv. That, and that, and that, and—

[Strikes him and kicks him.

Metaph. O tempora ! O mores !

[Exit, DON ALVAREZ, following him with a bell at his ear.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*The Street before the House of DON ALVAREZ.**Enter LOPEZ.*

Lop. Sometimes Fortune seconds a bold design, and when folly has brought us into a trap, impudence brings us out on't. I have been caught by this hot-headed lover here, and have told like a puppy what I shall be beaten for like a dog. Come! courage, my dear Lopez; fire will fetch out fire. Thou hast told one body thy master's secret, e'en tell it to half-a-dozen more, and try how that will thrive; go tell it to the two old Dons, the lovers' fathers. The thing's done, and can't be retrieved; perhaps they'll lay their two ancient heads together, club a pennyworth of wisdom a-piece, and with great penetration at last find out that 'tis best to submit where 'tis not in their power to do otherwise. This being resolved, there's no time to be lost.

*[Knocks at DON ALVAREZ'S door.]**Don Alv. [Within.] Who knocks?**Lop. Lopez.**Don Alv. [Looking out.] What dost want?**Lop. To bid you good-morrow, sir.**Don Alv. Well, good-morrow to thee again.**[Retires.]**Lop.* What a—I think he does not care for my company.*[Knocks again.]**Don Alv. [Within.] Who knocks?**Lop. Lopez.**Don Alv. [Looking out.] What wouldst have?**Lop.* My old master, sir, gives his service to you, and desires to know how you do.*Don Alv.* How I do! why, well; how should I do? Service to him again.*[Retires.]**Lop. Sir!**Don Alv. [Returning.]* What the deuce wouldst thou have with me, with thy good-morrows and thy services?*Lop. [Aside.]* This man does not understand good breeding, I find.—*[Aloud.]* Why, sir, my master has some very earnest business with you.*Don Alv.* Business! about what? What business can he have with me?*Lop.* I don't know, truly; but 'tis some very important matter. He has just now (as I hear) discovered some great secret, which he must needs talk with you about.*Don Alv.* Ha! a secret, sayest thou?*Lop.* Yes; and bid me bring him word if you were at home, he'd be with you presently. Sir, your humble servant.*[Exit.]**Enter DON ALVAREZ, from the house.*

Don Alv. A secret; and must speak with me about it! Heavens, how I tremble! What can this message mean? I have very little acquaintance with him, what business can he have with me? An important secret 'twas, he said, and that he had just discovered it. Alas! I have in the world but one, if it be that—I'm lost; an eternal blot must fix upon me. How unfortunate am I, that I have not followed the honest counsels of my heart, which have often urged me to set my conscience at ease, by rendering to him the estate that is his due, and

which by a foul imposture I keep from him! But 'tis now too late; my villainy is out, and I shall not only be forced with shame to restore him what is his, but shall be perhaps condemned to make him reparation with my own. O terrible view!

Enter DON FELIX.

Don Fel. [Aside.] My son to go and marry her without her father's knowledge! This can never end well. I don't know what to do, he'll conclude I was privy to it, and his power and interest are so great at court he may with ease contrive my ruin. I tremble at his sending to speak with me.—Mercy on me, there he is!

Don Alv. [Aside.] Ah! shield me, kind Heaven! there's Don Felix come. How I am struck with the sight of him! Oh, the torment of a guilty mind!

Don Fel. What shall I say to soften him? *[Aside.]**Don Alv.* How shall I look him in the face?*[Aside.]**Don Fel.* 'Tis impossible he can forgive it.*[Aside.]**Don Alv.* To be sure he'll expose me to the whole world.*[Aside.]**Don Fel.* I see his countenance change.*[Aside.]**Don Alv.* With what contempt he looks upon me!*[Aside.]**Don Fel.* I see, Don Alvarez, by the disorder of your face you are but too well informed of what brings me here.*Don Alv.* 'Tis true.*Don Fel.* The news may well surprise you, 'tis what I have been far from apprehending.*Don Alv.* Wrong, very wrong, indeed.*Don Fel.* The action is certainly to the last point to be condemned, and I think nobody should pretend to excuse the guilty.*Don Alv.* They are not to be excused, though Heaven may have mercy.*Don Fel.* That's what I hope you will consider.*Don Alv.* We should act as Christians.*Don Fel.* Most certainly.*Don Alv.* Let mercy then prevail.*Don Fel.* It is indeed of heavenly birth.*Don Alv.* Generous Don Felix!*Don Fel.* Too indulgent Alvarez!*Don Alv.* I thank you on my knee.*Don Fel.* 'Tis I ought to have been there first.*[They kneel.]**Don Alv.* Is it then possible we are friends?*Don Fel.* Embrace me to confirm it.*[They embrace.]**Don Alv.* Thou best of men!*Don Fel.* Unlooked for bounty!*Don Alv. [Rising.]* Did you know the torment this unhappy action has given me—*Don Fel.* 'Tis impossible it could do otherwise; nor has my trouble been less.*Don Alv.* But let my misfortune be kept secret.*Don Fel.* Most willingly; my advantage is sufficient by it, without the vanity of making it public to the world.

Don Alv. [Aside.] Incomparable goodness! That I should thus have wronged a man so worthy —*[Aloud.]* My honour then is safe?

Don Fel. For ever, even for ever let it be a secret, I am content.

Don Alv. [Aside.] Noble gentleman!—*[Aloud.]* As to what advantages ought to accrue to you by it, it shall be all to your entire satisfaction.

Don Fel. [Aside.] Wonderful bounty!—*[Aloud.]* As to that, Don Alvarez, I leave it entirely to you, and shall be content with whatever you think reasonable.

Don Alv. I thank you, from my soul I must, you know I must.—*[Aside.]* This must be an angel, not a man.

Don Fel. The thanks lie on my side, Alvarez, for this unexpected generosity; but may all faults be forgot, and Heaven ever prosper you!

Don Alv. The same prayer I, with a double fervour, offer up for you.

Don Fel. Let us then once more embrace, and be forgiveness sealed for ever.

Don Alv. Agreed; thou best of men, agreed.

[They embrace.]

Don Fel. This thing then being thus happily terminated, let me own to you, Don Alvarez, I was in extreme apprehensions of your utmost resentment on this occasion; for I could not doubt but you had formed more happy views in the disposal of so fair a daughter as Leonora, than my poor son's inferior fortune e'er can answer: but since they are joined, and that—

Don Alv. Ha!

Don Fel. Nay, 'tis very likely to discourse of it may not be very pleasing to you, though your christianity and natural goodness have prevailed on you so generously to forgive it. But to do justice to Leonora, and screen her from your too harsh opinion in this unlucky action, 'twas that cunning wicked creature that attends her, who by unusual arts wrought her to this breach of duty, for her own inclinations were disposed to all the modesty and resignation a father could ask from a daughter; my son I can't excuse, but since your bounty does so, I hope you'll quite forget the fault of the less-guilty Leonora.

Don Alv. [Aside.] What a mistake have I lain under here! and from a groundless apprehension of one misfortune, find myself in the certainty of another.

Don Fel. He looks disturbed; what can this mean?

Don Alv. [Aside.] My daughter married to his son!—Confusion! But I find myself in such unruly agitation, something wrong may happen if I continue with him; I'll therefore leave him.

Don Fel. You seem thoughtful, sir; I hope there's no—

Don Alv. A sudden disorder I am seized with; you'll pardon me, I must retire. *[Exit.]*

Don Fel. I don't like this:—he went oddly off.—I doubt he finds this bounty difficult to go through with. His natural resentment is making an attack upon his acquired generosity: pray Heaven it ben't too strong for't. The misfortune is a great one, and can't but touch him nearly. It was not natural to be so calm; I wish it don't yet drive him to my ruin. But here comes this young hot-brained coxcomb, who with his midnight amours has been the cause of all this mischief to me.

Enter DON LORENZO.

So, sir, are you come to receive my thanks for your noble exploit? You think you have done bravely now, ungracious offspring, to bring perpetual troubles on me! Must there never pass a day, but I must drink some bitter potion or other of your preparation for me?

Don Lor. I am amazed, sir; pray what have I done to deserve your anger?

Don Fel. Nothing, no manner of thing in the world; nor never do. I am an old testy fellow, and am always scolding, and finding fault for nothing; complaining that I have got a coxcomb of a son that makes me weary of my life, fancying he perverts the order of nature, turning day into night, and night into day; getting whims in my brain, that he consumes his life in idleness, unless he rouses now and then to do some noble stroke of mischief; and having an impertinent dream at this time, that he has been making the fortune of the family, by an underhand marriage with the daughter of a man who will crush us all to powder for it. Ah—ungracious wretch, to bring an old man into all this trouble! The pain thou gavest thy mother to bring thee into the world, and the plague thou hast given me to keep thee here, make the getting thee (though 'twas in our honeymoon) a bitter remembrance to us both. *[Exit.]*

Don Lor. So, all's out!—Here's a noble storm arising, and I'm at sea in a cock-boat! But which way could this business reach him? by this traitor Lopez—it must be so; it could be no other way; for only he, and the priest that married us, know of it. The villain will never confess though: I must try a little address with him, and conceal my anger.—Oh! here he comes.

Re-enter LOPEZ.

Lopez!

Lop. Do you call, sir?

Don Lor. I find all's discovered to my father; the secret's out; he knows my marriage.

Lop. He knows your marriage!—How the pest should that happen? Sir, 'tis impossible!—that's all.

Don Lor. I tell thee 'tis true; he knows every particular of it.

Lop. He does!—Why then, sir, all I can say is, that Satan and he are better acquainted than the devil and a good Christian ought to be.

Don Lor. Which way he has discovered it I can't tell, nor am I much concerned to know, since, beyond all my expectations, I find him perfectly easy at it, and ready to excuse my fault with better reasons than I can find to do it myself.

Lop. Say you so?—I'm very glad to hear that; then all's safe. *[Aside.]*

Don Lor. 'Tis unexpected good fortune; but it could never proceed purely from his own temper; there must have been pains taken with him to bring him to this calm. I'm sure I owe much to the bounty of some friend or other; I wish I knew where my obligation lay, that I might acknowledge it as I ought.

Lop. [Aside.] Are you thereabouts, i'faith? Then sharp's the word; egad I'll own the thing, and receive his bounty for't.—*[Aloud.]* Why, sir—not that I pretend to make a merit o' the matter, for, alas! I am but your poor hireling, and there-

fore bound in duty to render you all the service I can;—but—'tis I have done't.

Don Lor. What hast thou done?

Lop. What no man else could have done—the job, sir; told him the secret, and then talked him into a liking on't.

Don Lor. 'Tis impossible; thou dost not tell me true.

Lop. Sir, I scorn to reap anything from another man's labours; but if this poor piece of service carries any merit with it, you now know where to reward it.

Don Lor. Thou art not serious?

Lop. I am, or may hunger be my messmate!

Don Lor. And may famine be mine, if I don't reward thee for't as thou deservest!—Dead!

[*Making a pass at him.*]

Lop. Have a care there!—[*Leaping on one side.*] What do you mean, sir? I bar all surprise.

Don Lor. Traitor! is this the fruit of the trust I placed in thee, villain!

[*Making another thrust at him.*]

Lop. Take heed, sir! you'll do one a mischief before y'are aware.

Don Lor. What recompense canst thou make me, wretch, for this piece of treachery? Thy sordid blood can't expiate the thousandth!—But I'll have it, however.

[*Thrusts again.*]

Lop. Look you there again! Pray, sir, be quiet; is the devil in you? 'Tis bad jesting with edged tools. Egad, that last push was within an inch o'me! I don't know what you make all this bustle about; but I'm sure I've done all for the best, and I believe 'twill prove for the best too at last, if you'll have but a little patience. But if gentlemen will be in their airs in a moment—Why, what the deuse—I'm sure I have been as eloquent as Cicero in your behalf! and I don't doubt, to good purpose too, if you'll give things time to work. But nothing but foul language, and naked swords about the house!—Sa, sa! run you through, you dog! Why nobody can do business at this rate.

Don Lor. And suppose your project fail, and I'm ruined by't, sir!

Lop. Why, 'twill be time enough to kill me then, sir; won't it? What should you do it for now? Besides, I an't ready, I'm not prepared; I might be undone by't.

Don Lor. But what will Leonora say to her marriage being known, wretch?

Lop. Why maybe she'll draw—her sword too.—[*Showing his tongue.*] But all shall be well with you both, if you will but let me alone.

Don Lor. Peace! here's her father.

Lop. That's well: we shall see how things go presently.

Re-enter DON ALVAREZ.

Don Alv. [*Aside.*] The more I recover from the disorder this discourse has put me in, the more strange the whole adventure appears to me. Leonora maintains there is not a word of truth in what I have heard; that she knows nothing of marriage: and, indeed, she tells me this with such a naked air of sincerity, that, for my part, I believe her. What then must be their project? Some villainous intention, to be sure; though which way I yet am ignorant.—But here's the bridegroom; I'll accost him.—[*Aloud.*] I am told, sir, you take upon you

to scandalise my daughter, and tell idle tales of what can never happen.

Lop. Now methinks, sir, if you treated your son-in-law with a little more civility, things might go just as well in the main.

Don Alv. What means this insolent fellow by my son-in-law! I suppose 'tis you, villain, are the author of this impudent story.

Lop. You seem angry, sir;—perhaps without cause.

Don Alv. Cause, traitor! Is a cause wanting, where a daughter's defamed, and a noble family scandalised?

Lop. There he is, let him answer you.

Don Alv. I should be glad he'd answer me: why, if he had any desires to my daughter, he did not make his approaches like a man of honour.

Lop. Yes; and so have had the doors bolted against him, like a house-breaker.

[*Aside.*]

Don Lor. Sir, to justify my proceeding, I have little to say; but to excuse it, I have much, if any allowance may be made to a passion which, in your youth, you have yourself been swayed by. I love your daughter to that excess—

Don Alv. You would undo her for a night's lodging.

Don Lor. Undo her, sir!

Don Alv. Yes, that's the word. You knew it was against her interest to marry you, therefore you endeavoured to win her to't in private; you knew her friends would make a better bargain for her, therefore you kept your designs from their knowledge, and yet you love her to that excess—

Don Lor. I'd readily lay down my life to serve her.

Don Alv. Could you readily lay down fifty thousand pistoles to serve her, your excessive love would come with better credentials: an offer of life is very proper for the attack of a counterscarp, but a thousand ducats will sooner carry a lady's heart. You are a young man, but will learn this when you are older.

Lop. But since things have succeeded better this once, sir, and that my master will prove a most incomparable good husband (for that he'll do, I'll answer for him), and that 'tis too late to recal what's already done, sir—

Don Alv. What's done, villain?

Lop. Sir, I mean—that since my master and my lady are married, and—

Don Alv. Thou liest! they are not married.

Lop. Sir, I say—that since they are married, and that they love each other so passing dearly—indeed, I fancy—that—

Don Alv. Why, this impudence is beyond all bearing! Sir, do you put your rascal upon this?

Don Lor. Sir, I am in a wood! I don't know what it is you mean.

Don Alv. And I am in a plain, sir, and think I may be understood. Do you pretend you are married to my daughter?

Don Lor. Sir, 'tis my happiness on one side, as it is my misfortune on another.

Don Alv. And you do think this idle project can succeed? You do believe your affirming you are married to her will induce both her and me to consent it shall be so?

Lop. Sir, I see you make my master almost out of his wits to hear you talk so: but I, who am but a stander-by now, as I was at the wedding, have

mine about me, and desire to know, whether you think this project can succeed? Do you believe your affirming they are not married, will induce both him and I to give up the lady? One short question to bring this matter to an issue,—why do you think they are not married?

Don Alv. Because she utterly renounces it.

Lop. And so she will her religion, if you attack it with that dreadful face. D'y'e hear, sir? the poor lady is in love heartily, and I wish all poor ladies that are so, would dispose of themselves so well as she has done; but you scare her out of her senses. Bring her here into the room, speak gently to her, tell her you know the thing is done, that you have it from a man of honour,—me: that maybe you wish it had been otherwise, but are a Christian, and profess mercy, and therefore have resolved to pardon her. Say this, and I shall appear a man of reputation, and have satisfaction made me.

Don Alv. Or an impudent rogue, and have all your bones broke.

Lop. Content!

Don Alv. Agreed!—Leonora!—Who's there? call Leonora.

Lop. All will go rarely, sir; we shall have shot the gulf in a moment. *[Aside to LORENZO.]*

Enter LEONORA.

Don Alv. Come hither, Leonora.

Lop. So, now we shall see.

Don Alv. I called you to answer for yourself; here's a strong claim upon you; if there be any thing in the pretended title, conceal it no farther, it must be known at last, it may as well be so now. Nothing is so uneasy as uncertainty, I would therefore be gladly freed from it. If you have done what I am told you have, 'tis a great fault indeed; but as I fear 'twill carry much of its punishment along with it, I shall rather reduce my resentment into mourning your misfortune, than suffer it to add to your affliction; therefore speak the truth.

Lop. Well, this is fair play; now I speak, sir.—You see, fair lady, the goodness of a tender father, nothing need therefore hinder you from owning a most loving husband. We had like to have been all together by the ears about this business, and pails of blood were ready to run about the house: but thank Heaven, the sun shines out again, and one word from your sweet mouth makes fair weather for ever. My master has been forced to own your marriage, he begs you'll do so too.

Leo. What does this impudent rascal mean?

Lop. Ha!—madam!

Leo. *[To DON LORENZO]* Sir, I should be very glad to know what can have been the occasion of this wild report; sure you cannot be yourself a party to it!

Lop. He, he—

Don Lor. Forgive me, dear Leonora, I know you had strong reasons for the secret being longer kept; but 'tis not my fault, our marriage is disclosed.

Leo. Our marriage, sir!—

Don Lor. 'Tis known, my dear, though much against my will; but since it is so, 'twould be in vain for us to deny it longer.

Leo. Then, sir, I am your wife? I fell in love with you, and married you without my father's knowledge?

Don Lor. I dare not be so vain to think 'twas

love; I humbly am content to owe the blessing to your generosity; You saw the pains I suffer'd for your sake, And in compassion eased 'em.

Leo. I did, sir!

Sure this exceeds all human impudence!

Lop. Truly, I think it does. She'd make an incomparable actress. *[Aside.]*

Don Lor. I begin to be surprised, madam, at your carrying this thing so far; you see there's no occasion for it; and for the discovery, I have already told you 'twas not my fault.

Lop. My master's! no, 'twas I did it. Why, what a bustle's here! I knew things would go well, and so they do, if folks would let 'em. But if ladies will be in their merriments, when gentlemen are upon serious business, why what a deuse can one say to 'em!

Leo. I see this fellow is to be an evidence in your plot. Where you hope to drive, it is hard to guess; for if anything can exceed its impudence, it is its folly. A noble stratagem indeed to win a lady by! I could be diverted with it, but that I see a face of villany requires a rougher treatment: I could almost, methinks, forget my sex, and be my own avenger.

Don Lor. Madam, I am surprised beyond all—

Lop. Pray, sir, let me come to her; you are so surprised you'll make nothing on't: she wants a little snubbing.—Look you, madam, I have seen many a pleasant humour amongst ladies, but you outcut 'em all. Here's contradiction with a vengeance! You han't been married eight-and-forty hours, and you are slap—at your husband's beard already. Why, do you consider who he is?—who this gentleman is?—and what he can do—by law? Why, he can lock you up—knock you down—tie you neck and heels—

Don Lor. Forbear, you insolent villain, you!

[Offering to strike him.]

Leo. That—for what's past however.

[Giving him a box on the ear.]

Lop. I think—she gave me a box o' th' ear; ha!—*[Exit LEONORA.]* Sir, will you suffer your old servants to be used thus by new comers? It's a shame, a mere shame! Sir, will you take a poor dog's advice for once? She denies she's married to you: take her at her word; you have seen some of her humours,—let her go.

Don Alv. Well, gentlemen, thus far you see I have heard all with patience; have you content? or how much farther do you design to go with this business?

Lop. Why truly, sir, I think we are near at stand.

Don Alv. 'Tis time, you villain you!

Lop. Why and I am a villain now, if every word I've spoke be not as true as—the Gazette: and your daughter's no better than a—a—a whimsical young woman, for making disputes amongst gentlemen. And if everybody had their deserts, she'd have a good—I won't speak it out to inflame reckonings; but let her go, master.

Don Alv. Sir, I don't think it well to spend any more words with your impudent and villanous servant here.

Lop. Thank you, sir: but I'd let her go.

Don Alv. Nor have I more to say to you than this, that you must not think so daring an affront to my family can go long unresented. Farewell!

[Exit.]

Don Lor. Well, sir, what have you to say for yourself now?

Lop. Why, sir, I have only to say, that I am a very unfortunate—middle-aged man; and that I believe all the stars upon heaven and earth have been concerned in my destiny. Children now unborn will hereafter sing my downfal in mournful lines, and notes of doleful tune: I am at present troubled in mind, despair around me, signified in appearing gibbets, with a great bundle of dog-whips by way of preparation.

I therefore will go seek some mountain high,
If high enough some mountain may be found,
With distant valley, dreadfully profound,
And from the horrid cliff—look calmly all around.
Farewell!

Don Lor. No, sirrah: I'll see your wretched end myself. Die here, villain! [*Drawing his sword.*]

Lop. I can't, sir, if anybody looks upon me.

Don Lor. Away, you trifling wretch! but think not to escape, for thou shalt have thy recompense. [*Exit.*]

Lop. Why, what a mischievous jade is this, to make such an uproar in a family the first day of her marriage! Why, my master won't so much as get a honeymoon out of her! Egad, I'd let her go. If she be thus in her soft and tender youth, she'll be rare company at threescore. Well, he may do as he pleases; but were she my dear, I'd let her go—such a foot at her tail, I'd make the truth bounce out at her mouth like a pellet out of a pot-gun. [*Exit.*]

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—A Street.

Enter CAMILLO and ISABELLA.

Isab. 'Tis an unlucky accident indeed!

Cam. Ah, Isabella, fate has now determined my undoing! This thing can ne'er end here; Leonora and Lorenzo must soon come to some explanation; the dispute is too monstrous to pass over without further inquiry, which must discover all, and what will be the consequence I tremble at. For whether Don Alvarez knows of the imposture, or whether he is deceived with the rest of the world, when once it breaks out, and that the consequence is the loss of that great wealth he now enjoys by it, what must become of me? All paternal affections then must cease, and regarding me as an unhappy instrument in the trouble which will then o'erload him, he will return me to my humble birth, and then I'm lost for ever. For what, alas! will the deceived Lorenzo say? A wife, with neither fortune, birth, nor beauty, instead of one most plenteously endowed with all. O Heavens! what a sea of misery I have before me!

Isab. Indeed you reason right, but these reflections are ill-timed; why did you not employ them sooner?

Cam. Because I loved.

Isab. And don't you do so now?

Cam. I do, and therefore 'tis I make these cruel just reflections.

Isab. So that love, I find, can do anything.

Cam. Indeed it can. Its powers are wondrous great, its pains no tongue can tell, its bliss no heart conceive, crowns cannot recompense its torments, heaven scarce supplies its joys. My stake is of this value. Oh, counsel me how I shall save it!

Isab. Alas! that counsel's much beyond my wisdom's force, I see no way to help you.

Cam. And yet 'tis sure there's one.

Isab. What?

Cam. Death.

Isab. There possibly may be another; I have a thought this moment—perhaps there's nothing in it; yet a small passage comes to my remembrance, that I regarded little when it happened—I'll go and search for one may be of service. But hold; I see

Don Carlos. He'll but disturb us now, let us avoid him. [*Excunt.*]

Enter DON CARLOS and SANCHE.

Don Car. Repulsed again! this is not to be borne. What though this villain's story be a falsehood, was I to blame to hearken to it? This usage cannot be supported: how was it she treated thee?

San. Never was ambassador worse received. Madam, my master asks ten thousand pardons, and humbly begs one moment's interview:—Begone, you rascal you! Madam, what answer shall I give my master?—Tell him he's a villain. Indeed, fair lady, I think this is hasty treatment.—Here, my footmen! toss me this fellow out at the window;—and away she went to her devotions.

Don Car. Did you see Jacinta?

San. Yes; she saluted me with half-a-score rogues and rascals too. I think our destinies are much alike, sir: and, o' my conscience, a couple of scurvy jades we are hampered with.

Don Car. Ungrateful woman! to receive with such contempt so quick a return of a heart so justly alarmed.

San. Ha! ha! ha!

Don Car. What, no allowance to be made to the first transports of a lover's fury, when roused by so dreadful an appearance! As just as my suspicions jades we are hampered with, have I long suffered 'em to arraign her?

San. No.

Don Car. Have I waited for oaths or imprecations to clear her?

San. No.

Don Car. Nay, even now is not the whole world still in suspense about her? whilst I alone conclude her innocent.

San. 'Tis very true.

Don Car. She might, methinks, through this profound respect,

Observe a flame another would have cherish'd;
She might support me against groundless fears,
And save me from a rival's tyranny;
She might release me from these cruel racks,
And would, no doubt, if she could love as I do.

San. Ha! ha! ha!

Don Car. But since she don't, what do I whining here?

Curse on the base humilities of love!

San. Right.

Don Car. Let children kiss the rod that flays 'em, Let dogs lie down, and lick the shoe that spurns 'em.

San. Ay.

Don Car. I am a man by nature meant for power;

The sceptre's given us to wield, and we Betray our trust whenever

We meanly lay it at a woman's feet.

San. True, we are men, boo!—Come, master, let us both be in a passion; here's my sceptre.—[*Showing a cudgel.*] Subject Jacinta, look about you. Sir, was you ever in Muscovy? the women there love the men dearly; why? because—[*shaking his stick*] there's your love-powder for you. Ah, sir, were we but wise and stout, what work should we make with them! But this humble love-making spoils 'em all. A rare way indeed to bring matters about with 'em! We are persuading 'em all day they are angels and goddesses, in order to use 'em at night like human creatures; we are like to succeed truly!

Don Car. For my part, I never yet could bear a slight from anything, nor will I now. There's but one way, however, to resent it from a woman; and that's to drive her bravely from your heart, and place a worthier in her vacant throne.

San. Now, with submission to my betters, I have another way, sir; I'll drive my tyrant from my heart, and place myself in her throne. Yes; I will be lord of my own tenement, and keep my household in order. Would you would do so too, master! For, look you, I have been servitor in a college at Salamanca, and read philosophy with the doctors; where I found that a woman, in all times, has been observed to be an animal hard to understand, and much inclined to mischief. Now, as an animal is always an animal, and a captain always a captain, so a woman is always a woman: whence it is that a certain Greek says, her head is like a bank of sand; or, as another, a solid rock; or, according to a third, a dark lantern. Pray, sir, observe, for this is close reasoning; and so as the head is the head of the body; and that the body without a head, is like a head without a tail; and that where there is neither head nor tail, 'tis a very strange body: so I say a woman is by comparison, do you see, (for nothing explains things like comparisons,) I say by comparison, as Aristotle has often said before me, one may compare her to the raging sea. For as the sea, when the wind rises, knits its brows like an angry bull, and that waves mount upon rocks, and rocks mount upon waves; that porpoises leap like trouts, and whales skip about like gudgeons; that ships roll like beer-barrels, and mariners pray like saints; just so, I say, a woman—A woman, I say, just so, when her reason is shipwrecked upon her passion, and the hulk of her understanding lies thumping against the rock of her fury; then it is, I say, that by certain immotions, which—um—cause, as one may suppose, a sort of convulsive—yes—hurricane—um—like—in short, a woman is like the devil.

Don Car. Admirably reasoned indeed, Sancho!

San. Pretty well, I thank Heaven.—But here come the crocodiles to weep us into mercy.

Enter LEONORA and JACINTA.

Master, let us show ourselves men, and leave their briny tears to wash their dirty faces.

Don Car. It is not in the power of charms to move me.

San. Nor me, I hope; and yet I fear those eyes Will look out sharp to snatch up such a prize.

[*Pointing to JACINTA.*

Jac. He's coming to us, madam, to beg pardon; but sure you'll never grant it him!

Leo. If I do, may Heaven never grant me mine.

Jac. That's brave.

Don Car. You look, madam, upon me as if you thought I came to trouble you with my usual importunities; I'll ease you of that pain, by telling you, my business now is calmly to assure you, but I assure it you with heaven and hell for seconds; for may the joys of one fly from me, whilst the pains of t'other overtake me, if all your charms displayed e'er shake my resolution; I'll never see you more.

San. Bon!

Leo. You are a man of that nice honour, sir, I know you'll keep your word: I expected this assurance from you, and came this way only to thank you for't.

Jac. Very well!

Don Car. You did, imperious dame, you did! How base is woman's pride! How wretched are the ingredients it is formed of! If you saw cause for just disdain, why did you not at first repulse me? Why lead a slave in chains, that could not grace your triumphs? If I am thus to be contemned, think on the favours you have done the wretch, and hide your face for ever.

San. Well argued.

Leo. I own you have hit the only fault the world can charge me with: the favours I have done to you I am indeed ashamed of; but, since women have their frailties, you'll allow me mine.

Don Car. 'Tis well, extremely well, madam. I'm happy, however, you at last speak frankly. I thank you for it; from my soul I thank you: but don't expect me grovelling at your feet again; don't, for if I do—

Leo. You will be treated as you deserve; trod upon.

Don Car. Give me patience!—But I don't want it; I am calm. Madam, farewell; be happy if you can; by Heavens I wish you so, but never spread your net for me again; for if you do—

Leo. You'll be running into it.

Don Car. Rather run headlong into fire and Rather be torn with pincers bit from bit; [flames; Rather be broil'd like martyrs upon gridirons!— But I am wrong; this sounds like passion, and Heaven can tell I am not angry. Madam, I think we have no farther business together; your most humble servant.

Leo. Farewell t'ye, sir.

Don Car. [*To SANCHO.*] Come along.—[*Goes to the scene and returns.*] Yet once more before I go (lest you should doubt my resolution) may I starve, perish, rot, be blasted, dead, damned, or any other thing that men or gods can think on, if on any occasion whatever, civil or military, pleasure or business, love or hate, or any other accident of life, I, from this moment, change one word or look with you. [*As he goes off, SANCHO claps him on the back.*

Leo. Content!—Come away, Jacinta.

Re-enter DON CARLOS.

Don Car. Yet one word, madam, if you please. I have a little thing here belongs to you, a foolish bauble I once was fond of.—*[Twisting her picture from his breast.]* Will you accept a trifle from your servant?

Leo. Willingly, sir. I have a bauble too I think you have some claim to; you'll wear it for my sake.

[Breaks a bracelet from her arm, and gives it him.]

Don Car. Most thankfully. This too I should restore you, it once was yours.—*[Giving her a table-book.]* By your favour, madam—there is a line or two in it I think you did me once the honour to write with your own fair hand. Here it is. *[Reads.]*

You love me, Carlos, and would know

The secret movements of my heart,

Whether I give you mine or no,

With yours, methinks, I'd never, never part.

Thus you have encouraged me, and thus you have deceived me.

San. Very true.

Leo. *[Pulling out a table-book.]* I have some faithful lines too; I think I can produce 'em. *[Reads.]*

How long soe'er, to sigh in vain,

My destiny may prove,

My fate (in spite of your disdain)

Will let me glory in your chain,

And give me leave eternally to love.

There, sir, take your poetry again.—*[Throwing it at his feet.]* 'Tis not much the worse for my wearing; 'twill serve again upon a fresh occasion.

Jac. Well done!

Don Car. I believe I can return the present, madam, with—a pocketfull of your prose.—There!

[Throwing a handful of letters at her feet.]

Leo. Jacinta, give me his letters.—There, sir, not to be behindhand with you.

[Takes a handful of his letters out of a box, and throws them in his face.]

Jac. And there! and there! and there, sir!

[JACINTA throws the rest at him.]

San. 'Cods my life, we want ammunition! but for a shift—there! and there! you saucy slut you!

[SANCRO pulls a pack of dirty cards out of his pocket, and throws them at her; then they close; he pulls off her headclothes, and she his wig, and then part, she running to her mistress, he to his master.]

Jac. I think, madam, we have clearly the better on't.

Leo. For a proof, I resolve to keep the field.

Jac. Have a care he don't rally and beat you yet though: pray walk off.

Leo. Fear nothing.

San. How the armies stand and gaze at one another after the battle! What think you, sir, of showing yourself a great general, by making an honourable retreat?

Don Car. I scorn it!—O Leonora! Leonora! a heart like mine should not be treated thus!

Leo. Carlos! Carlos! I have not deserved this usage!

Don Car. Barbarous Leonora! but 'tis useless to reproach you; she that is capable of what you have done, is formed too cruel ever to repent of it. Go on then, tyrant; make your bliss complete; torment me still, for still, alas! I love enough to be tormented.

Leo. Ah Carlos! little do you know the tender

movements of that thing you name; the heart where love presides, admits no thought against the honour of its ruler.

Don Car. 'Tis not to call that honour into doubt, If, conscious of our own unworthiness, We interpret every frown to our destruction.

Leo. When jealousy proceeds from such humble apprehensions, it shows itself with more respect than yours has done.

Don Car. And where a heart is guiltless, it easily forgives a greater crime.

Leo. Forgiveness is not now in our debate; if both have been in fault, 'tis fit that both should suffer for it; our separation will do justice on us.

Don Car. But since we are ourselves the judges of our crimes, what if we should inflict a gentler punishment?

Leo. 'Twould but encourage us to sin again.

Don Car. And if it should—

Leo. 'Twould give a fresh occasion for the pleasing exercise of mercy.

Don Car. Right; and so

We act the part of earth and heaven together, Of men and gods, and taste of both their pleasures.

Leo. The banquet's too inviting to refuse it.

Don Car. Then let's fall on, and feed upon't for ever.

[Carries her off, embracing her, and kissing her hand.]

Leo. Ah woman! foolish, foolish woman!

San. Very foolish indeed.

Jac. But don't expect I'll follow her example.

San. You would, Mopsy, if I'd let you.

Jac. I'd sooner tear my eyes out; ah—that she had a little of my spirit in her!

San. I believe I shall find thou hast a great deal of her flesh, my charmer; but 'twon't do; I am all rock, hard rock, very marble.

Jac. A very pumice stone, you rascal you, if one would try thee! But to prevent thy humilities, and show thee all submission, would be vain; to convince thee thou hast nothing but misery and despair before thee, here—take back thy paltry thimble, and be in my debt, for the shirts I have made thee with it.

San. Nay, if y'are at that sport, mistress, I believe I shall lose nothing by the balance of the presents. There, take thy tobacco-stopper, and stop thy—

Jac. Here—take thy satin pincushion, with thy curious half hundred of pins in't, thou madest such a vapouring about yesterday. Tell 'em carefully, there's not one wanting.

San. There's thy ivory-hafted knife again, whet it well; 'tis so blunt 'twill cut nothing but love.

Jac. And there's thy pretty pocket scissors thou hast honoured me with, they'll cut off a leg or an arm. Heaven bless 'em!

San. Here's the enchanted handkerchief you were pleased to endear with your precious blood, when the violence of your love at dinner t'other day made you cut your fingers.—There.

[Blows his nose in it and gives it her.]

Jac. The rascal so provokes me, I won't even keep his paltry garters from him. D'you see these? You pitiful beggarly scoundrel you!—There, take 'em, there.

[She takes her garters off, and flaps them about his face.]

San. I have but one thing more of thine.—*[Showing his cudgel.]* I own 'tis the top of all thy presents, and might be useful to me; but that

thou mayest have nothing to upbraid me with, e'en take it again with the rest of'em.

[Lifting it up to strike her, she leaps about his neck.]

Jac. Ah cruel Sancho!—Now beat me, Sancho, do.

San. Rather, like Indian beggars, beat my precious self. *[Throws away his stick, and embraces her.]* Rather let infants' blood about the streets, Rather let all the wine about the cellar.

Rather let—Oh Jacinta—thou hast o'ercome.

How foolish are the great resolves of man!

Resolves, which we neither would keep, nor can.

When those bright eyes in kindness please to shine,

Their goodness I must needs return with mine:

Bless my Jacinta in her Sancho's arms—

Jac. And I my Sancho with Jacinta's charms.

[Exeunt.]

ACT V.

SCENE I.—A Street.

Enter LOPEZ.

Lop. As soon as it is night, says my master to me, though it cost me my life, I'll enter Leonora's lodgings; therefore make haste, Lopez, prepare everything necessary, three pair of pocket-pistols, two wide-mouthed blunderbusses, some six ells of sword-blade, and a couple of dark lanterns. When my master said this to me; Sir, said I to my master, (that is, I would have said it if I had not been in such a fright I could say nothing, however I'll say it to him now, and shall probably have a quiet hearing,) look you, sir, by dint of reason I intend to confound you. You are resolved, you say, to get into Leonora's lodgings though the devil stand in the doorway?—Yes, Lopez, that's my resolution.—Very well; and what do you intend to do when you are there?—Why, what an injured man should do; make her sensible of—Make her sensible of a pudding! don't you see she's a jade? She'll raise the house about your ears, arm the whole family, set the great dog at you.—Were there legions of devils to repulse me, in such a cause I could disperse them all.—Why then you have no occasion for help, sir, you may leave me at home to lay the cloth.—No; thou art my ancient friend, my fellow traveller, and to reward thy faithful services this night thou shalt partake my danger and my glory.—Sir, I have got glory enough under you already, to content any reasonable servant for his life.—Thy modesty makes me willing to double my bounty; this night may bring eternal honour to thee and thy family.—Eternal honour, sir, is too much in conscience for a serving-man; besides, ambition has been many a great soul's undoing.—I doubt thou art afraid, my Lopez; thou shalt be armed with back, with breast, and head-piece.—They will encumber me in my retreat.—Retreat, my hero! thou never shalt retreat.—Then by my troth I'll never go, sir.—But here he comes.

Enter DON LORENZO.

Don Lor. Will it never be night! sure 'tis the longest day the sun e'er travelled.

Lop. Would 'twere as long as those in Greenland, sir, that you might spin out your life t'other half year. I don't like these nightly projects; a man can't see what he does. We shall have some scurvy mistake or other happen; a brace of bullets blunder through your head in the dark perhaps, and spoil all your intrigue.

Don Lor. Away, you trembling wretch, away!

Lop. Nay, sir, what I say is purely for your safety; for as to myself—uds-death, I no more value the losing a quart of blood than I do drinking a quart of wine. Besides, my veins are too full, my physician advised me but yesterday to let go twenty ounces for my health. So you see, sir, there's nothing of that in the case.

Don Lor. Then let me hear no other objections; for till I see Leonora I must lie upon the rack. I cannot bear her resentment, and will pacify her this night, or not live to see to-morrow.

Lop. Well, sir, since you are so determined, I shan't be impertinent with any farther advice; but I think you have laid your design to—*[Coughs]* (I have got such a cold to-day!) to get in privately, have you not?

Don Lor. Yes; and have taken care to be introduced as far as her chamber-door with all secrecy.

Lop. *[Coughing.]* This unlucky cough! I had rather have had a fever at another time. Sir, I should be sorry to do you more harm than good upon this occasion: if this cough should come upon me in the midst of the action *[coughs]* and give the alarm to the family, I should not forgive myself as long as I lived.

Don Lor. I have greater ventures than that to take my chance for, and can't dispense with your attendance, sir.

Lop. This 'tis to be a good servant, and make one's self necessary!

Enter TOLEDO.

Tol. Sir,—I am glad I have found you. I am a man of honour, you know, and do always profess losing my life upon a handsome occasion. Sir, I come to offer you my service. I am informed from unquestionable hands that Don Carlos is enraged against you to a dangerous degree; and that old Alvarez has given positive directions to break the legs and arms of your servant Lopez.

Lop. Look you there now, I thought what 'twould come to! What do they meddle with me for? what have I to do in my master's amours? The old Don's got out of his senses, I think; have I married his daughter?

Don Lor. Fear nothing, we'll take care o' thee.—Sir, I thank you for the favour of your intelligence, 'tis nothing however but what I expected, and am provided for.

Tol. Sir, I would advise you to provide yourself with good friends, I desire the honour to keep your back hand myself.

Lop. 'Tis very kind indeed. Pray, sir, have you ne'er a servant with you could hold a racket for me too?

Tol. I have two friends fit to head two armies; and yet—a word in your ear, they shan't cost you above a ducat a piece.

Lop. Take 'em by all means, sir, you were never offered a better pennyworth in your life.

Tol. Ah, sir!—little Diego—you have heard of him; he'd have been worth a legion upon this occasion. You know, I suppose, how they have served him.—They have hanged him, but he made a noble execution; they clapped the rack and the priest to him at once, but could neither get a word of confession nor a groan of repentance; he died mighty well truly.

Don Lor. Such a man is indeed much to be regretted: as for the rest of your escort, captain, I thank you for 'em, but shall not use 'em.

Tol. I'm sorry for't, sir, because I think you go in very great danger; I'm much afraid your rival won't give you fair play.

Lop. If he does I'll be hanged! he's a damned passionate fellow, and cares not what mischief he does.

Don Lor. I shall give him a very good opportunity; for I'll have no other guards about me but you, sir. So come along.

Lop. Why, sir, this is the sin of presumption; setting heaven at defiance, making jack-pudding of a blunderbuss.

Don Lor. No more, but follow.—Hold! turn this way; I see Camillo there. I would avoid him, till I see what part he takes in this odd affair of his sister's. For I would not have the quarrel fixed with him, if it be possible to avoid it. [*Exit.*]

Lop. Sir!—Captain Toledo! one word if you please, sir. I'm mighty sorry to see my master won't accept of your friendly offer. Look ye, I'm not very rich; but as far as the expense of a dollar went, if you'd be so kind to take a little care of me, it should be at your service.

Tol. Let me see;—a dollar you say? but suppose I'm wounded?

Lop. Why you shall be put to no extraordinary charge upon that: I have been prentice to a barber, and will be your surgeon myself.

Tol. 'Tis too cheap in conscience; but my land-estate is so ill paid this war time—

Lop. That a little industry may be commendable; so say no more, that matter's fixed. [*Exeunt.*]

Enter CAMILLO.

Cam. How miserable a perplexity have I brought myself into! Yet why do I complain? since, With all the dreadful torture I endure, I can't repent of one wild step I've made. O love! what tempests canst thou raise, what Canst thou assuage! [*storms*]
To all thy cruelties I am resign'd. Long years
Through seas of torment I'm content to roll,
So thou wilt guide me to the happy port
Of my Lorenzo's arms,
And bless me there with one calm day at last.

Enter ISABELLA.

What news, dear Isabella? Methinks there's something cheerful in your looks may give a trem-

bling lover hopes. If you have comfort for me, speak, for I indeed have need of it.

Isab. Were you wants yet still greater than they are, I bring a plentiful supply.

Cam. O Heavens! is't possible!

Isab. New mysteries are out, and if you can find charms to wean Lorenzo from your sister, no other obstacle is in your way to all you wish.

Cam. Kind messenger from Heaven, speak on.

Isab. Know then, that you are daughter to Alvarez.

Cam. How! daughter to Alvarez!

Isab. You are: the truth this moment's come to light; and till this moment he, although your father, was a stranger to it; nay, did not even know you were a woman. In short, the great estate, which has occasioned these uncommon accidents, was left but on condition of a son; great hopes of one there was, when you destroyed 'em, and to your parents came a most unwelcome guest. To repair the disappointment, you were exchanged for that young Camillo, who few months after died. Your father then was absent, but your mother quick in contrivance, bold in execution, during that infant's sickness, had resolved his death should not deprive her family of those advantages his life had given it; so ordered things with such dexterity, that once again there passed a change between you. Of this (for reasons yet unknown to me) she made a secret to her husband, and took such wise precautions, that till this hour 'twas so to all the world, except the person from whom I now have heard it.

Cam. This news indeed affords a view of no unhappy termination; yet there are difficulties still may be of fatal hindrance.

Isab. None, except that one I just now named to you; for to remove the rest, know I have already unfolded all both to Alvarez and Don Felix.

Cam. And how have they received it?

Isab. To your wishes both. As for Lorenzo, he is yet a stranger to all has passed, and the two old fathers desire he may some moments longer continue so. They have agreed to be a little merry with the heats he is in, and engage you in a family-quarrel with him.

Cam. I doubt, Isabella, I shall act that part but faintly.

Isab. No matter, you'll make amends for it in the scene of reconciliation.

Cam. Pray Heaven it be my lot to act it with him.

Isab. Here comes Don Felix to wish you joy.

Enter DON FELIX.

Don Fel. Come near, my daughter, and with extended arms of great affection let me receive thee.—[*Kisses her.*] Thou art a dainty wench, good faith thou art, and 'tis a mettled action thou hast done; if Lorenzo don't like thee the better for't, cods my life, he's a pitiful fellow, and I shan't believe the bonny old man had the getting of him.

Cam. I'm so encouraged by your forgiveness, sir, methinks I have some flattering hopes of his.

Don Fel. Of his! egad and he had best; I believe he'll meet with his match if he don't. What dost think of trying his courage a little, by way of a joke or so?

Isab. I was just telling her your design, sir.

Don Fel. Why I'm in a mighty witty way upon this whimsical occasion; but I see him coming. You must not appear yet; go your way in to the rest of the people there, and I'll inform him what a squabble he has worked himself into here.

[*Exeunt CAMILLO and ISABELLA.*]

Re-enter DON LORENZO and LOPEZ.

Lop. Pray, sir, don't be so obstinate now, don't affront Heaven at this rate. I had a vision last night about this business on purpose to forewarn you; I dreamt of goose-eggs, a blunt knife, and the snuff of a candle; I'm sure there's mischief towards.

Don Lor. You cowardly rascal, hold your tongue.

Don Fel. Lorenzo, come hither, my boy, I was just going to send for thee. The honour of our ancient family lies in thy hands; there is a combat preparing, thou must fight, my son.

Lop. Look you there now, did not I tell you? Oh, dreams are wondrous things! I never knew that snuff of a candle fail yet.

Don Lor. Sir, I do not doubt but Carlos seeks my life, I hope he'll do it fairly.

Lop. Fairly, do you hear, fairly! give me leave to tell you, sir, folks are not fit to be trusted with lives that don't know how to look better after 'em.—Sir, you gave it him, I hope you'll make him take a little more care on't.

Don Fel. My care shall be to make him do as a man of honour ought to do.

Lop. What, will you let him fight then? let your own flesh and blood fight?

Don Fel. In a good cause, as this is.

Lop. *O monstrum horrendum!* Now I have that humanity about me, that if a man but talks to me of fighting, I shiver at the name on't.

Don Lor. What you do on this occasion, sir, is worthy of you: and had I been wanting to you, in my due regards before, this noble action would have stamped that impression, which a grateful son ought to have for so generous a father.

Lop. [*Aside.*] Very generous truly! gives him leave to be run through the guts, for his posterity to brag on a hundred years hence.

Don Lor. I think, sir, as things now stand, it won't be right for me to wait for Carlos's call; I'll if you please prevent him.

Lop. Ay, pray sir, do prevent him by all means; 'tis better made up, as you say, a thousand times.

Don Fel. Hold your tongue, you impertinent jack-a-napes! I will have him fight, and fight like a fury too; if he don't he'll be worsted, I can tell him that.—For know, son, your antagonist is not the person you name, it is an enemy of twice his force.

Lop. O dear! O dear! O dear! and will nobody keep 'em asunder?

Don Lor. Nobody shall keep us asunder, if once I know the man I have to deal with.

Don Fel. Thy man then is—Camillo.

Don Lor. Camillo!

Don Fel. 'Tis he; he'll suffer nobody to decide this quarrel but himself.

Lop. Then there are no seconds, sir?

Don Fel. None.

Lop. He's a brave man.

Don Fel. No, he says nobody's blood shall be

spilled on this occasion, but theirs who have a title to it.

Lop. I believe he'll scarce have a lawsuit upon the claim.

Don Fel. In short, he accuses thee of a shameful falsehood, in pretending his sister Leonora was thy wife; and has upon it prevailed with his father, as thou hast done with thine, to let the debate be ended by the sword 'twixt him and thee.

Lop. And pray, sir, with submission, one short question if you please; what may the gentle Leonora say of this business?

Don Fel. She approves of the combat, and marries Carlos.

Lop. Why, God a-mercy!

Don Lor. Is it possible? sure she's a devil, not a woman.

Lop. Ecod, sir, a devil and a woman both, I think.

Don Fel. Well, thou sha't have satisfaction of some of 'em.—Here they all come.

Enter DON ALVAREZ, DON CARLOS, LEONORA, JACINTA, and SANCHO.

Don Alv. Well, Don Felix, have you prepared your son? for mine, he's ready to engage.

Don Lor. And so is his. My wrongs prepare me for a thousand combats. My hand has hitherto been held by the regard I've had to everything of kin to Leonora; but since the monstrous part she acts has driven her from my heart, I call for reparation from her family.

Don Alv. You'll have it, sir; Camillo will attend you instantly.

Lop. O lack! O lack! will nobody do a little something to prevent bloodshed?—[*To LEONORA.*] Why, madam, have you no pity, no bowels? Stand and see one of your husbands stotered before your face? 'Tis an arrant shame.

Leo. If widowhood be my fate, I must bear it as I can.

Lop. Why, did you ever hear the like?

Don Lor. Talk to her no more. Her monstrous impudence is no otherwise to be replied to than by a dagger in her brother's heart.

Leo. Yonder he's coming to receive it. But have a care, brave sir, he does not place it in another's.

Don Lor. It is not in his power. He has a rotten cause upon his sword, I'm sorry he is engaged in't; but since he is he must take his fate.—[*To DON CARLOS.*] For you, my bravo, expect me in your turn.

Don Car. You'll find Camillo, sir, will set your hand out.

Don Lor. A beardless boy! You might have matched me better, sir; but prudence is a virtue.

Don Fel. Nay, son, I would not have thee despise thy adversary neither; thou'lt find Camillo will put thee hardly to't.

Don Lor. I wish we were come to the trial. Why does he not appear?

Jac. Now do I hate to hear people brag thus. Sir, with my lady's leave, I'll hold a ducat he disarms you. [*They laugh.*]

Don Lor. Why, what!—I think I'm sported with. Take heed, I warn you all; I am not to be trifled with.

Re-enter CAMILLO and ISABELLA.

Leo. You shan't, sir; here's one will be in earnest with you.

Don Lor. He's welcome: though I had rather have drawn my sword against another.—I'm sorry, Camillo, we should meet on such bad terms as these; yet more sorry your sister should be the wicked cause on't: but since nothing will serve her but the blood either of a husband or brother, she shall be glutt'd with't. Draw!

Lop. Ah Lard! ah Lard! ah Lard!

Don Lor. And yet, before I take this instrument of death into my fatal hand, hear me, Camillo; hear, Alvarez; all!

I imprecate the utmost powers of Heaven
To shower upon my head the deadliest of its wrath;
I ask that all hell's torments may unite
To round my soul with one eternal anguish,
If wicked Leonora ben't my wife.

All. O Lord! O Lord! O Lord!

Leo. Why then, may all those curses pass him by,
And wrap me in their everlasting pains,
If ever once I had a fleeting thought
Of making him my husband.

Lop. O Lord! O Lord! O Lord!

Leo. Nay more; to strike him dumb at once,
and show what men with honest looks can practise,
know he's married to another.

Don Alv. & Don Fel. How!

Leo. The truth of this is known to some here.

Jac. Nay, 'tis certainly so.

Isab. 'Tis to a friend of mine.

Don Car. I know the person.

Don Lor. 'Tis false! and thou art a villain for thy testimony.

Cam. Then let me speak; what they aver is true, and I myself was, in disguise, a witness of its doing.

Don Lor. Death and confusion! he a villain too!
—Have at thy heart. *[He draws.]*

Lop. Ah!—I can't bear the sight on't.

Cam. Put up that furious thing, there's no business for't.

Don Lor. There's business for a dagger, stripping; 'tis that should be thy recompense.

Cam. Why then to show thee naked to the world, and close thy mouth for ever—I am myself thy wife—

Don Lor. What does the dog mean?

Cam. To fall upon the earth and sue for mercy.

[Kneels and lets her periwig fall off.]

Don Lor. A woman!—

Lop. Ecod, and a pretty one too; you wags you!

Don Lor. I'm all amazement!—Rise, Camillo, (if I am still to call you by that name,) and let me hear the wonders you have for me.

Isab. That part her modesty will ask from me.

I'm to inform you then, that this disguise
Hides other mysteries besides a woman;
A large and fair estate was cover'd by't,
Which with the lady now will be resign'd you.
'Tis true, in justice it was yours before;
But 'tis the god of love has done you right.
To him you owe this strange discovery;
Through him you are to know the true Camillo's
dead, and that this fair adventurer is daughter to
Alvarez.

Don Lor. Incredible! But go on; let me hear more.

Don Fel. She'll tell thee the rest herself the next dark night she meets thee in the garden.

Don Lor. Ha!—Was it Camillo then, that I—

Isab. It was Camillo who there made you happy: and who has virtue, beauty, wit, and love—enough to make you so while life shall last you.

Don Lor. The proof she gives me of her love deserves a large acknowledgment indeed. Forgive me, therefore, Leonora, if what I owe this goodness and these charms, I with my utmost care, my life, my soul, endeavour to repay.

Cam. Is it then possible you can forgive me?

Don Lor. Indeed I can; few crimes have such a claim

To mercy. But join with me then, dear Camillo, (For still I know you by no other name,)

Join with me to obtain your father's pardon.

Yours, Leonora, too, I must implore;

And yours, my friend, for now we may be such.

[To CARLOS.]

Of all I ask forgiveness: and since there is
So fair a cause of all my wild mistakes,
I hope I by her interest shall obtain it.

Don Alv. You have a claim to mine, Lorenzo, I wish I had so strong a one to yours; but if by future services, (though I lay down my life amongst 'em) I may blot out of your remembrance a fault (I cannot name), I then shall leave the world in peace.

Don Lor. In peace then, sir, enjoy it; for from this very hour, whate'er is past with me is gone for ever. Your daughter is too fair a mediatrix to be refused his pardon, to whom she owes the charms she pleads with for it.

From this good day, then let all discord cease;
Let those to come be harmony and peace;
Henceforth let all our different interests join,
Let fathers, lovers, friends, let all combine,
To make each other's days as bless'd as she will
mine. *[Exeunt omnes.]*

EPILOGUE.

(WRITTEN BY MR. MOTTEUX) SPOKEN BY ISABELLA.

I'M thinking, now good husbands are so few,
To get one like my friend, what I must do.
Camillo ventured hard ; yet at the worst,
She stole love's honeymoon, and tried her lover
first.

Many poor damsels, if they dared to tell,
Have done as much, but have not 'scaped so well.
'Tis well the scene's in Spain ; thus in the dark,
I should be loath to trust a London spark.
Some accident might, for a private reason,
Silence a female, all this acting season.
Hard fate of woman ! Any one would vex,
To think what odds you men have of our sex.
Restraint and customs share our inclination,
You men can try, and run o'er half the nation.
We dare not, even to avoid reproach,
When you're at White's, peep out of hackney-
coach ;

Nor with a friend at night, our fame regarding,
With glass drawn up, drive about Covent-garden.

If poor town-ladies steal in here, you rail,
Though like chaste nuns, their modest looks they
With this decorum they can hardly gain [veil ;
To be thought virtuous, even in Drury-lane,
Though this you'll not allow, yet sure you may
A plot to snap you, in an honest way.
In love-affairs, one scarce would spare a brother :
All cheat ; and married folks may keep a pother,
But look as if they cheated one another.
You may pretend, our sex dissembles most,
But of your truth none have much cause to boast :
You promise bravely ; but for all your storming,
We find you're not so valiant at performing.
Then sure Camillo's conduct you'll approve :
Would you not do as much for one you love ?
Wedlock's but a blind bargain at the best,
You venture more, sometimes, to be not half so
blest.

All, soon or late, that dangerous venture make,
And some of you may make a worse mistake.

THE COUNTRY HOUSE.

A Farce.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MONSIEUR BARNARD, *a ci-devant Lawyer turned Country-Gentleman.*

MONSIEUR GRIFFARD, *Brother to MONSIEUR BARNARD.*

ERASTUS, *in love with MARIAMNE.*

DORANT, *Son to MONSIEUR BARNARD.*

MONSIEUR LE MARQUIS.

BARON DE MESSY.

JANNO, *Cousin to MONSIEUR BARNARD.*

COLIN, *Servant to MONSIEUR BARNARD.*

CHARLY, *a little Boy, Cousin to MARIAMNE.*

Servant to ERASTUS.

MONSIEUR LA GARANTIERE,

MONSIEUR LA ROSE,

MONSIEUR TROFIGNAC,

A Soldier, Cook, other Servants, &c.

MADAME BARNARD, *Wife to MONSIEUR BARNARD.*

MARIAMNE, *Daughter to MONSIEUR BARNARD by a former marriage.*

MAWKIN, *Sister to JANNO.*

LISETTA, *Maid to MARIAMNE.*

} *Friends to DORANT.*

SCENE,—NORMANDY IN FRANCE.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A Room in Monsieur BARNARD's Country-House.*

Enter ERASTUS and his Servant, LISETTA following.

Lis. Once more I tell ye, sir, if you have any consideration in the world for her, you must begone this minute.

Erast. My dear Lisetta, let me but speak to her, let me but see her only.

Lis. You may do what you will; but not here, whilst you are in our house. I do believe she's as impatient to see you as you can be to see her; but—

Erast. But why won't you give us that satisfaction then?

Lis. Because I know the consequence; for when you once get together, the devil himself is not able to part ye; you will stay so long till you are surprised, and what will become of us then?

Serv. Why, then we shall be thrown out at the window, I suppose.

Lis. No, but I shall be turned out of doors.

Erast. How unfortunate am I! these doors are open to all the world, and only shut to me.

Lis. Because you come for a wife, and at our house we do not care for people that come for wives.

Serv. What would you have us come for, child?

Lis. Anything but wives; because they cannot be put off without portions.

Serv. Portions! No, no, never talk of portions; my master nor I neither don't want portions; and

if he'd follow my advice, a regiment of fathers should not guard her.

Lis. What say you?

Serv. Why, if you'll contrive that my master may run away with your mistress, I don't much care, faith, if I run away with you.

Lis. Don't you so, rogue's face! But I hope to be better provided for.

Erast. Hold your tongues.—But where is MARIAMNE's brother? He is my bosom friend, and would be willing to serve me.

Lis. I told you before that he has been abroad a-hunting, and we han't seen him these three days; he seldom lies at home, to avoid his father's ill humour; so that it is not your mistress only that our old covetous cuff teases:—there's nobody in the family but feels the effects of his ill humour:—by his good will he would not suffer a creature to come within his doors, or eat at his table;—and if there be but a rabbit extraordinary for dinner, he thinks himself ruined for ever.

Erast. Then I find you pass your time comfortably in this family.

Lis. Not so bad as you imagine neither, perhaps; for, thank Heaven, we have a mistress that's as bountiful as he is stingy, one that will let him say what he will, and yet does what she will. But hark, here's somebody coming; it is certainly he.

Erast. Can't you hide us somewhere?

Lis. Here, here, get you in here as fast as you can.

Serv. Thrust me in too. [*Puts them into the closet.*]

Enter MARIAMNE.

Lis. Oh, is it you?

Mar. So, Lisetta, where have you been? I've been looking for ye all over the house. Who are those people in the garden with my mother-in-law? I believe my father won't be very well pleased to see 'em there.

Lis. And here's somebody else not far off, that I believe your father won't be very well pleased with neither.—Come, sir, sir! *[Calls.]*

Re-enter ERASTUS and Servant.

Mar. O heavens!

Lis. Come, lovers, I can allow you but a short bout on't this time; you must do your work with a jirk—one whisper, two sighs, and a kiss; make haste, I say, and I'll stand sentry for ye in the meantime. *[Exit.]*

Mar. Do you know what you expose me to, Erastus? What do you mean?

Erast. To die, madam, since you receive me with so little pleasure.

Mar. Consider what would become of me, if my father should see you here.

Erast. What would you have me do?

Mar. Expect with patience some happy turn of affairs. My mother-in-law is kind and indulgent to a miracle; and her favour, if well managed, may turn to our advantage; and could I prevail upon myself to declare my passion to her, I don't doubt but she'd join in our interest.

Erast. Well, since we've nothing to fear from her, and your brother, you know, is my intimate friend, you may therefore conceal me somewhere about the house for a few days. I'll creep into any hole.

Serv. Ay, but who must have the care of bringing us victuals? *[Aside.]*

Erast. Thrust us into the cellar, or up into the garret: I don't care where it is, so that it be but under the same roof with you.

Serv. But I don't say so, for that jade Lisetta will have the feeding of us, and I know what kind of diet she keeps.—I believe we shan't be like the fox in the fable, our bellies won't be so full but we shall be able to creep out at the same hole we got in at. *[Aside.]*

Erast. Must I then begone? must I return to Paris?

Re-enter LISETTA.

Lis. Yes, that you must, and immediately too, for here's my master coming in upon ye.

Erast. What shall I do?

Lis. Begone this minute.

Mar. Stay in the village till you hear from me, none of our family know that you are in it.

Erast. Shall I see you sometimes?

Mar. I han't time to answer you now.

Lis. Make haste, I say; are you bewitched?

Erast. Will you write to me?

Mar. I will if I can.

Lis. Begone, I say; is the devil in you?—*[Thrusts ERASTUS and Servant out.]* Come this way, your father's just stepping in upon us. *[Exeunt.]*

Enter Monsieur BARNARD beating COLIN.

Mon. Barn. Rogue! rascal! did not I command you? Did not I give you my orders, sirrah?

Col. Why, you gave me orders to let nobody in; and madam, her gives me orders to let everybody

in—why, the devil himself can't please you boath, I think.

Mon. Barn. But, sirrah, you must obey my orders, not hers.

Col. Why, the gentlefolks asked for her, they did not ask for you—what do you make such a noise about?

Mon. Barn. For that reason, sirrah, you should not have let 'em in.

Col. Hold, sir, I'd rather see you angry than her, that's true; for when you're angry you have only the devil in ye, but when madam's in a passion she has the devil and his dam both in her belly.

Mon. Barn. You must mind what I say to you, sirrah, and obey my orders.

Col. Ay, ay, measter—but let's not quarrel with one another—you're always in such a plaguy humour.

Mon. Barn. What are these people that are just come?

Col. Nay, that know not I—but as fine volk they are as ever eye beheld, Heaven bless 'em!

Mon. Barn. Did you hear their names?

Col. Noa, noa, but in a coach they keam all besmeared with gould, with six breave horses, the like on 'em ne'er did I set eyes on.—'Twould do a man's heart good to look on sike fine beast, measter.

Mon. Barn. How many persons are there?

Col. Vour—two as fine men as ever woman bore, and two as dainty deames as a man would desire to lay his lips to.

Mon. Barn. And all this crew sets up at my house.

Col. Noa, noa, measter, the coachman is gone into the village to set up his coach at some inn, for I told him our coach-house was vull of vaggots, but he'll bring back the six horses, for I told him we had a rare good steable.

Mon. Barn. Did you so, rascal? did you so? *[Beats him.]*

Col. Doant, doant, sir, it would do you good to see sike doant, i'faith they look as if they had ne'er kept Lent.

Mon. Barn. Then they shall learn religion at my house.—Sirrah, do you take care they sup without oats to-night.—What will become of me! Since I have bought this damned country-house, I spend more in a summer than would maintain me seven year.

Col. Why, if you do spend money, han't you good things for it? Come they not to see you the whole country raund? Mind how you're beloved, measter.

Mon. Barn. Pox take such love!—

Re-enter LISETTA.

How now, what do you want?

Lis. Sir, there's some company in the garden with my mistress, who desire to see you.

Mon. Barn. The devil take 'em, what business have they here? But who are they?

Lis. Why, sir, there's the fat abbot that always sits so long at dinner, and drinks his two bottles by way of whet.

Mon. Barn. I wish his church was in his belly, that his guts might be half full before he came.—And who else?

Lis. Then there's the young marquis that won all my lady's money at cards.

Mon. Barn. Pox take him too!

Lis. Then there's the merry lady that's always in a good humour.

Mon. Barn. Very well.

Lis. Then there's she that threw down all my lady's china t'other day, and laughed at it for a jest.

Mon. Barn. Which I paid above fifty pounds for in earnest.—Very well, and pray how did madam receive all this fine company?—With a hearty welcome, and a curtsy with her bum down to the ground, ha?

Lis. No indeed, sir, she was very angry with 'em.

Mon. Barn. How, angry with 'em, say you?

Lis. Yes indeed, sir, for she expected they would have staid here a fortnight, but it seems things happen so unluckily that they can't stay here above ten days. *[Exit.]*

Mon. Barn. Ten days! how! what! four persons with a coach and six, and a kennel of hungry hounds in liveries, to live upon me ten days!

Enter Soldier.

So, what do you want?

Sol. Sir, I come from your nephew, captain Hungry.

Mon. Barn. Well, what does he want?

Sol. He gives his service to you, sir, and sends you word that he'll come and dine with you to-morrow.

Mon. Barn. Dine with me! no, no, friend, tell him I don't dine at all to-morrow, it is my fast-day, my wife died on't.

Sol. And he has sent you here a pheasant and a couple of partridges.

Mon. Barn. How's that, a pheasant and partridges, say you!—Let's see—very fine birds, truly.—Let me consider—to-morrow is not my fast-day, I mistook; tell my nephew he shall be welcome.—*[To COLIN.]* And d'ye hear? do you take these fowl and hang them up in a cool place—and take this soldier in, and make him drink—make him drink, d'ye see—a cup,—ay, a cup of small beer—d'ye hear?

Col. Yes, sir.—Come along; our small beer is rare good. *[Exit.]*

Sol. But, sir, he bade me tell you that he'll bring two or three of his brother officers along with him.

Mon. Barn. How's that! officers with him—here, come back—take the fowls again; I don't dine to-morrow, and so tell him.—*[Gives him the basket.]* Go, go! *[Thrusting him out.]*

Sol. Sir, sir, that won't hinder them from coming, for they retired a little distance off the camp, and because your house is near 'em, sir, they resolve to come.

Mon. Barn. Go, begone, sirrah!—*[Thrusts him out.]* There's a rogue now, that sends me three lean carrion birds, and brings half-a-dozen varlets to eat them!

Enter Monsieur GRIFFARD.

Mon. Griff. Brother, what is the meaning of these doings? If you don't order your affairs better, you'll have your fowls taken out of your very yard, and carried away before your face.

Mon. Barn. Can I help it, brother? But what's the matter now?

Mon. Griff. There's a parcel of fellows have been hunting about your grounds all this morning, broke down your hedges, and are now coming into your house.—Don't you hear them?

Mon. Barn. No, no, I don't hear them: who are they?

Mon. Griff. Three or four rake-helly officers, with your nephew at the head of 'em.

Mon. Barn. O the rogue! he might well send me fowls.—But is it not a vexatious thing, that I must stand still and see myself plundered at this rate, and have a carrion of a wife who thinks I ought to thank all these rogues that come to devour me! But can't you advise me what's to be done in this case?

Mon. Griff. I wish I could, for it goes to my heart to see you thus treated by a crew of vermin, who think they do you a great deal of honour in ruining of you.

Mon. Barn. Can there be no way found to redress this?

Mon. Griff. If I were you, I'd leave this house quite, and go to town.

Mon. Barn. What, and leave my wife behind me? ay that would be mending the matter indeed!

Mon. Griff. Why don't you sell it then?

Mon. Barn. Because nobody will buy it; it has got as bad a name as if the plague were in't; it has been sold over and over, and every family that has lived in it has been ruined.

Mon. Griff. Then send away all your beds and furniture, except what is absolutely necessary for your own family; you'll save something by that, for then your guests can't stay with you all night, however.

Mon. Barn. I've tried that already, and it signified nothing:—for they all got drunk and lay in the barn, and next morning laughed it off for a frolic.

Mon. Griff. Then there is but one remedy left that I can think off.

Mon. Barn. What's that?

Mon. Griff. You must e'en do what's done when a town's on fire, blow up your house that the mischief may run no further.—But who is this gentleman?

Mon. Barn. I never saw him in my life before, but for all that, I'll hold fifty pound he comes to dine with me.

Enter the Marquis.

Marq. My dear M. Barnard, I'm your most humble servant.

Mon. Barn. I don't doubt it, sir.

Marq. What is the meaning of this, M. Barnard? You look as coldly upon me as if I were a stranger.

Mon. Barn. Why truly, sir, I'm very apt to do so by persons I never saw in my life before.

Marq. You must know, M. Barnard, I'm come on purpose to drink a bottle with you.

Mon. Barn. That may be, sir; but it happens that at this time I'm not at all dry.

Marq. I left the ladies at cards waiting for supper; for my part, I never play; so I came to see my dear M. Barnard; and I'll assure you, I undertook this journey only to have the honour of your acquaintance.

Mon. Barn. You might have spared yourself that trouble, sir.

Marq. Don't you know, M. Barnard, that this house of yours is a little paradise?

Mon. Barn. Then rot me, if it be, sir!

Marq. For my part, I think a pretty retreat in

the country is one of the greatest comforts in life; I suppose you never want good company, M. Barnard?

Mon. Barn. No, sir, I never want company; for you must know I love very much to be alone.

Marq. Good wine you must keep above all things, without good wine and good cheer I would not give a fig for the country.

Mon. Barn. Really, sir, my wine is the worst you ever drank in your life, and you'll find my cheer but very indifferent.

Marq. No matter, no matter, M. Barnard; I've heard much of your hospitality, there's a plentiful table in your looks—and your wife is certainly one of the best women in the world.

Mon. Barn. Rot me if she be, sir!

Re-enter COLIN.

Col. Sir, sir, yonder's the baron de Messy has lost his hawk in our garden; he says it is perched upon one of the trees; may we let him have'n again, sir?

Mon. Barn. Go tell him, that—

Col. Nay, you may tell him yourself, for here he comes.

Enter Baron DE MESSY.

Baron. Sir, I'm your most humble servant, and ask you a thousand pardons that I should live so long in your neighbourhood, and come upon such an occasion as this to pay you my first respects.

Mon. Barn. It is very well, sir; but I think people may be very good neighbours without visiting one another.

Baron. Pray how do you like our country?

Mon. Barn. Not at all, I am quite tired on't.

Marq. Is it not the baron! it is certainly he.

Baron. How; my dear marquis! let me embrace you.

Marq. My dear baron, let me kiss you.

[They run and embrace.]

Baron. We have not seen one another since we were schoolfellows before.

Marq. The happiest rencontre!

Mon. Griff. These gentlemen seem to be very well acquainted.

Mon. Barn. Yes, but I know neither one nor t'other of them.

Marq. Baron, let me present to you one of the best-natured men in the world—M. Barnard here, the flower of hospitality!—I congratulate you upon having so good a neighbour.

Mon. Barn. Sir!

Baron. It is an advantage I am proud of.

Mon. Barn. Sir!

Marq. Come, gentlemen, you must be very intimate; let me have the honour of bringing you better acquainted.

Mon. Barn. Sir!

Baron. Dear Marquis, I shall take it as a favour if you'll do me that honour.

Barn. Sir!

Marq. With all my heart.—Come, baron, now you are here we can make up the most agreeable company in the world.—Faith you shall stay and pass a few days with us.

Mon. Barn. Methinks now, this son of a whore does the honours of my house to a miracle. *[Aside.]*

Baron. I don't know what to say, but I should be very glad you'd excuse me.

Marq. Faith, I can't.

Baron. Dear marquis!

Marq. Egad, I won't.

Baron. Well, since it must be so—but here comes the lady of the family.

Enter Madame BARNARD.

Marq. Madam, let me present you to the flower of France.

Baron. Madam, I shall think myself the happiest person in the world in your ladyship's acquaintance; and the little estate I have in this country I esteem more than all the rest, because it lies so near your ladyship.

Mad. Barn. Sir, your most humble servant.

Marq. Madam, the baron de Messy is the best-humoured man in the world. I've prevailed with him to give us his company a few days.

Mad. Barn. I'm sure you could not oblige M. Barnard or me more.

Mon. Barn. That's a damned lie, I'm sure.

[Aside.]

Baron. I'm sorry, madam, I can't accept of the honour—for it falls out so unluckily, that I've some ladies at my house that I can't possibly leave.

Marq. No matter, no matter, baron; you have ladies at your house, we have ladies at our house—let's join companies.—Come, let's send for them immediately; the more the merrier.

Mon. Barn. An admirable expedient, truly!

Baron. Well, since it must be so, I'll go for them myself.

Marq. Make haste, dear baron, for we shall be impatient for your return.

Baron. Madam, your most humble servant.—But I won't take my leave of you—I shall be back again immediately.—Monsieur Barnard, I'm your most humble servant; since you will have it so, I'll return as soon as possible.

[Exit Baron DE MESSY and Marquis.]

Mon. Barn. I have it so! 'sbud, sir, you may stay as long as you please; I'm in no haste for ye. Madam, you are the cause that I am not master of my own house.

Mad. Barn. Will you never learn to be reasonable, husband?

Re-enter the Marquis.

Marq. The baron is the best-humoured man in the world, only a little too ceremonious, that's all.—I love to be free and generous; since I came to Paris I've reformed half the court.

Mad. Barn. You are of the most agreeable humour in the world, marquis.

Marq. Always merry.—But what have you done with the ladies?

Mad. Barn. I left them at cards.

Marq. Well, I'll wait upon 'em. But, madam, let me desire you not to put yourself to any extraordinary expense upon our accounts.—You must consider we have more than one day to live together.

Mad. Barn. You are pleased to be merry, marquis.

Marq. Treat us without ceremony. Good wine and poultry you have of your own; wild-fowl and fish are brought to your door:—you need not send abroad for anything but a piece of butcher's meat, or so.—Let us have no extraordinaries. *[Exit.]*

Mon. Barn. If I had the feeding of you, a thunderbolt should be your supper.

Mad. Barn. Husband, will you never change your humour? If you go on at this rate, it will be impossible to live with ye.

Mon. Barn. Very true; for in a little time I shall have nothing to live upon.

Mad. Barn. Do you know what a ridiculous figure you make?

Mon. Barn. You'll make a great deal worse, when you han't money enough to pay for the washing of your shifts.

Mad. Barn. It seems you married me only to dishonour me; how horrible this is!

Mon. Barn. I tell ye, you'll ruin me. Do you know how much money you spend in a year?

Mad. Barn. Not I truly, I don't understand arithmetic.

Mon. Barn. Arithmetic, O Lud! O Lud! Is it so hard to comprehend, that he who receives but sixpence and spends a shilling, must be ruined in the end?

Mad. Barn. I never troubled my head with accounts, nor never will; but if you did but know what ridiculous things the world says of ye—

Mon. Barn. Rot the world!—'Twill say worse of me when I am in a jail.

Mad. Barn. A very Christian-like saying, truly!

Mon. Barn. Don't tell me of Christian!—Adsbud, I'll turn Jew, and nobody shall eat at my table that is not circumcised.

Re-enter LISETTA.

Lis. Madam, there's the duchess of Twangdillo just fell down near our door, her coach was overturned.

Mad. Barn. I hope her grace has received no hurt?

Lis. No, madam, but her coach is broke.

Mon. Barn. Then there's a smith in town may mend it.

Lis. They say 'twill require two or three days to fit it up again.

Mad. Barn. I'm glad on't with all my heart, for then I shall enjoy the pleasure of her grace's good company.—I'll wait upon her.

Mon. Barn. Very fine doings this!

[*Exeunt severally.*]

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*The same.*

Enter Monsieur BARNARD.

Mon. Barn. Heaven be now my comfort, for my house is hell!—[*Starts.*] Who's there, what do you want? who are you?

Enter Servant with a portmanteau.

Serv. Sir, here's your cousin Janno and cousin Mawkin come from Paris.

Mon. Barn. What a plague do they want?

Enter JANNO, leading in MAWKIN.

Jan. Come, sister, come along.—Oh, here's cousin Barnard.—Cousin Barnard, your servant.—Here's my sister Mawkin and I are come to see you.

Mawk. Ay, cousin, here's brother Janno and I are come from Paris to see you. Pray how does cousin Marianne do?

Jan. My sister and I waunt well at Paris; so my father sent us here for two or three weeks to take a little country air.

Mon. Barn. You could not come to a worse place; for this is the worst air in the whole country.

Mawk. Nay, I'm sure, my father says it is the best.

Mon. Barn. Your father's a fool; I tell ye, 'tis the worst.

Jan. Nay, cousin, I fancy you're mistaken now; for I begin to find my stomach come to me already; in a fortnight's time you shall see how I'll lay about me.

Mon. Barn. I don't at all doubt it.

Mawk. Father would have sent sister Flip and little brother Humphrey, but the calash would not holds us all, and so they don't come till to-morrow with mother.

Jan. Come, sister, let's put up our things in our chamber; and after you have washed my face,

and put me on a clean neckcloth, we'll go in and see how our cousins do.

Mawk. Ay, come along, we'll go and see cousin Marianne.

Jan. Cousin, we shan't give you much trouble, one bed will serve us; for sister Mawkin and I always lie together.

Mawk. But, cousin; mother prays you that you'd order a little cock-broth for brother Janno and I, to be got ready as soon as may be.

Jan. Ay, *à propos*, cousin Barnard, that's true; my mother desires that we may have some cock-broth to drink two or three times a-day between meals, for my sister and I are sick folks.

Mawk. And some young chickens too, the doctor said, would bring us to our stomachs very soon.

Jan. You fib now, sister, it waunt young chickens, so it waunt, it was plump partridges sure, the doctor said so.

Mawk. Ay, so it was, brother.—Come, let's go in, and see our cousins.

Jan. Ay, come along, sister.—Cousin Barnard, don't forget the cock-broth.

[*Exeunt JANNO and MAWKIN, Servant following.*]

Mon. Barn. What the devil does all this mean! Mother, and sister Flip, and little brother Humphrey, and chickens, and partridges, and cock-broth, and fire from hell to dress 'em all.

Enter COLIN.

Col. O measter! O measter!—you'll not chide to-day, as you are usen to do; no, marry will you not; see now what it is to be wiser than one's measter!

Mon. Barn. What would this fool have?

Col. Why, thanks, and money to-boot, an folk were grateful.

Mon. Barn. What's the matter?

Col. Why, the matter is, if you have good store of company in your house, you have good store of meat to put in their bellies.

Mon. Barn. How so? how so?

Col. Why, a large and stately stag, with a pair of horns on his head, Heaven bless you, your worship might be seen to wear 'em, comes towards our geat a puffing and blowing like a cow in hard labour.—Now, says I to myself, says I, if my measter refuse to let this fine youth come in, why, then, he's a fool d'ye see.—So I opens him the geat, pulls off my hat with both my hands, and said, You're welcome, kind sir, to our house.

Mon. Barn. Well, well!

Col. Well, well, ay, and so it is well, as you shall straightway find.—So in he trots, and makes directly towards our barn, and goes bounce, bounce, against the door, as boldly as if he had been measter on't :—he turns'en about and thawcks'n down in the stra, as who would say, Here will I lay me till to-morrow morning.—But he had no fool to deal with : for to the kitchen goes I, and takes me down a musket, and, with a breace of balls, I hits'n such a slap in the feace, that he ne'er spoke a word more to me.—Have I done well or no, measter?

Mon. Barn. Yes, you have done very well for once.

Col. But this was not all, for a parcel of dogs came yelping after their companion, as I suppose ; so I goes to the back-yard door, and, as many as came by, shu! says I, and drove 'em into the gearden ; so there they are as safe as in a pawnd—ha! ha! —But I can't but think what a power of pasties we shall have at our house, ha! ha! [Exit.]

Mon. Barn. I see Providence takes some care of me : this could never have happened in a better time.

Enter Cook.

Cook. Sir, sir, in the name of wonder, what do you mean? is it by your orders that all those dogs were let into the garden?

Mon. Barn. How!

Cook. I believe there's forty or fifty dogs tearing up the lettuce and cabbage by the root ; I believe before they have done, they'll rout up the whole garden.

Mon. Barn. This is that rogue's doings.

Cook. This was not all, sir, for three or four of 'em came into the kitchen, and tore half the meat off the spit that was for your worship's supper.

Mon. Barn. The very dogs plague me!

Cook. And then there's a crew of hungry footmen who devoured what the dogs left, so that there's not a bit left for your worship's supper ; not a scrap, not one morsel, sir. [Exit.]

Mon. Barn. Sure I shall hit on some way to get rid of this crew.

Re-enter COLIN.

Col. Sir, sir, here's the devil to do without yonder! A parcel of fellows swear they'll have our venison, and 'sblead I swear they shall have none on't ; so stand to your arms, measter.

Mon. Barn. Ay, you've done finely, rogue, rascal, have you not? [Beating him.]

Col. 'Sblead, I say they shan't have our venison! I'll die before I'll part with it. [Exit.]

Enter Monsieur GRIFFARD.

Mon. Griff. Brother, there's some gentlemen within ask for you.

Mon. Barn. What gentlemen? who are they?

Mon. Griff. The gentlemen that have been

hunting all this morning, they're now gone up to your wife's chamber.

Mon. Barn. The devil go with 'em!

Mon. Griff. There's but one way to get rid of this plague, and that is, as I told you before, to set your house on fire.

Mon. Barn. That's doing myself an injury, not them.

Mon. Griff. There's dogs, horses, masters, and servants, all intend to stay here till to-morrow morning, that they may be near the woods to hunt the earlier :—besides (I overheard them) they're in a kind of plot against you.

Mon. Barn. What did they say?

Mon. Griff. You'll be angry if I should tell ye.

Mon. Barn. Can I be more angry than I am?

Mon. Griff. They said, then, that it was the greatest pleasure in the world to ruin an old lawyer in the country, who had got an estate by ruining honest people in town.

Mon. Barn. There's rogues for ye!

Mon. Griff. I'm mistaken if they don't play you some trick or other.

Mon. Barn. Hold, let me consider.

Mon. Griff. What are you doing?

Mon. Barn. I'm conceiving, I shall bring forth presently.—Oh, I have it! it comes from hence, wit was its father, and invention its mother ; if I had thought on't sooner, I should have been happy.

Mon. Griff. What is it?

Mon. Barn. Come, come along, I say ; you must help me to put it in execution.

Enter LISETTA.

Lis. Sir, my mistress desires you to walk up ; she is not able, by herself, to pay the civilities due to so much good company.

Mon. Barn. O the carrion! What, does she play her jests upon me too?—but, mum, he laughs best that laughs last.

Lis. What shall I tell her, sir, will you come?

Mon. Barn. Yes, yes, tell her I'll come, with a pox to her! [Exit with Monsieur GRIFFARD.]

Lis. Nay, I don't wonder he should be angry :—they do try his patience, that's the truth on't.

Enter MARIAMNE.

What, madam, have you left your mother and the company?

Mar. So much tittle tattle makes my head ache ; I don't wonder my father should not love the country, for besides the expense he's at, he never enjoys a minute's quiet.

Lis. But let's talk of your own affairs :—have you writ to your lover?

Mar. No, for I have not had time since I saw him.

Lis. Now you have time then, about it immediately, for he's a sort of a desperate spark, and a body does not know what he may do if he should not hear from you. Besides you promised him, and you must behave yourself like a woman of honour, and keep your word.

Mar. I'll about it this minute.

Enter CHARLY.

Char. Cousin, cousin, cousin, where are you going? Come back, I have something to say to you.

Lis. What does this troublesome boy want?

Char. What's that to you what I want? Per-

haps I have something to say to her that will make her laugh.—Why sure! what need you care?

Mar. Don't snub my cousin Charly.—Well, what is't?

Char. Who do you think I met as I was coming here, but that handsome gentleman I've seen at church ogle you like any devil?

Mar. Hush, softly, cousin.

Lis. Not a word of that for your life.

Char. Oh, I know, I should not speak on't before folks; you know I made signs to you above, that I wanted to speak to you in private, didn't I, cousin?

Mar. Yes, yes, I saw you.

Char. You see I can keep a secret.—I am no girl, mun.—I believe I could tell ye fifty, and fifty to that, of my sister Cicely.—Oh, she's the devil of a girl!—but she gives me money and sugar-plums—and those that are kind to me fare the better for it, you see, cousin.

Mar. I always said my cousin Charly was a good-natured boy.

Lis. Well, and did he know you?

Char. Yes, I think he did know me—for he took me in his arms, and did so hug me and kiss me!—Between you and I, cousin, I believe he is one of the best friends I have in the world.

Mar. Well, but what did he say to you?

Char. Why, he asked me where I was going; I told him I was coming to see you; You're a lying young rogue, says he, I'm sure you dare not go see your cousin:—for you must know my sister was with me, and it seems he took her for a crack, and I being a forward boy, he fancied I was going to make love to her under a hedge, ha! ha!

Mar. So!

Char. So he offered to lay me a louis-d'or that I was not coming to you; so, Done! says I—Done! says he,—and so 'twas a bet, you know.

Mar. Certainly.

Char. So my sister's honour being concerned, and having a mind to win his louis-d'or, d'ye see—I bid him follow me, that he might see whether I came in or no.—But he said he'd wait for me at the little garden gate that opens into the fields, and if I would come through the house and meet him there, he should know by that whether I had been in or no.

Mar. Very well.

Char. So I went there, opened the gate, and let him in—

Mar. What then?

Char. Why, then he paid me the louis-d'or, that's all.

Mar. Why, that was honestly done.

Char. And then he talked to me of you, and said you had the charmingest bobbies, and every time he named 'em, Ha! says he, as if he had been sipping hot tea.

Mar. But was this all?

Char. No, for he had a mind, you must know, to win his louis-d'or back again; so he laid me another that I dare not come back and tell you that he was there; so, cousin, I hope you won't let me lose, for if you don't go to him and tell him that I've won, he won't pay me.

Mar. What, would you have me go and speak to a man?

Char. Not for any harm, but to win your poor cousin a louis-d'or. I'm sure you will—for you're a modest young woman, and may go without danger.

—Well, cousin, I'll swear you look very handsome to-day, and have the prettiest bobbies there; do let me feel 'em, I'll swear you must.

Mar. What does the young rogue mean? I swear I'll have you whipped.

[*Exit* CHARLY and MARIAMNE.]

Re-enter COLIN.

Col. Ha! ha! ha! our old gentleman's a wag, i'faith, he'll be even with 'em for all this, ha! ha! ha!

Lis. What's the matter? what does the fool laugh at?

Col. We an't in our house now, Lisetta, we're in an inn: ha! ha!

Lis. How in an inn?

Col. Yes, in an inn; my measter has gotten an old rusty sword and hung it up at our geat, and writ underneath with a piece of charcoal with his own fair hand, *At the Sword Royal; Entertainment for Man and Horse*; ha! ha!—

Lis. What whim is this?

Col. Thou and I live at the Sword Royal, ha! ha!

Lis. I'll go tell my mistress of her father's extravagance. [*Exit.*]

Re-enter Monsieur BARNARD and Monsieur GRIFFARD.

Mon. Barn. Ha! ha! yes I think this will do.—Sirrah, Colin, you may now let in all the world; the more the better.

Col. Yes, sir.—Odsflesh! we shall break all the inns in the country:—for we have a breave handsome landlady, and a curious young lass to her daughter.—Oh, here comes my young measter.—We'll make him chamberlain—ha! ha!

Enter DORANT.

Mon. Barn. What's the matter, son? How comes it that you are all alone? You used to do me the favour to bring some of your friends along with ye.

Dor. Sir, there are some of 'em coming; I only rid before to beg you to give 'em a favourable reception.

Mon. Barn. Ay, why not? It is both for your honour and mine; you shall be master.

Dor. Sir, we have now an opportunity of making all the gentlemen in the country our friends.

Mon. Barn. I'm glad on't with all my heart; pray how so?

Dor. There's an old quarrel to be made up between two families, and all the company are to meet at our house.

Mon. Barn. Ay, with all my heart; but pray what is the quarrel?

Dor. O, sir, a very ancient quarrel; it happened between their great grandfathers about a duck.

Mon. Barn. A quarrel of consequence truly!

Dor. And 'twill be a great honour to us if this should be accommodated at our house.

Mon. Barn. Without doubt.

Dor. Dear sir, you astonish me with this goodness; how shall I express this obligation? I was afraid, sir, you would not like it.

Mon. Barn. Why so?

Dor. I thought, sir, you did not care for the expense.

Mon. Barn. O Lord, I am the most altered man in the world from what I was, I'm quite another thing, mun! But how many are there of 'em?

Dor. Not above nine or ten of a side, sir.

H H

Mon. Barn. Oh, we shall dispose of them easily enough.

Dor. Some of 'em will be here presently; the rest I don't expect till to-morrow morning.

Mon. Barn. I hope they're good companions, jolly fellows, that love to eat and drink well?

Dor. The merriest, best-natured creatures in the world, sir.

Mon. Barn. I'm very glad on't, for 'tis such men I want.—Come, brother, you and I will go and prepare for their reception.

[*Exit with Monsieur GRIFFARD.*]

Dor. Bless me, what an alteration is here! How my father's temper is changed within these two or three days! Do you know the meaning of it?

Col. Why the meaning on't is, ha! ha!

Dor. Can you tell me the cause of this sudden change, I say?

Col. Why the cause on't is, ha! ha!—

Dor. What do you laugh at, sirrah? do you know?

Col. Ha!—Because the old gentleman's a droll, that's all.

Dor. Sirrah, if I take the cudgel—

Col. Nay, sir, don't be angry for a little harmless mirth.—But here are your friends.

Enter Messieurs LA GARANTIERE, LA ROSE, and TROFIGNAC.

Dor. Gentlemen, you are welcome to Pasty Hall.—See that these gentlemen's horses are taken care of. [*Exit COLIN.*]

La Gar. A very fine dwelling this.

Dor. Yes, the house is tolerable.

La Rose. And a very fine lordship belongs to it.

Dor. The land is good.

Trof. This house ought to have been mine; for my grandfather sold it to his father, from whom your father purchased it.

Dor. Yes, the house has gone through a great many hands.

La Gar. A sign there has always been good housekeeping in it.

Dor. And I hope there ever will.

Re-enter Monsieur BARNARD and Monsieur GRIFFARD, dressed like Drawers.

Mon. Barn. Gentlemen, do you call? will you please to see a room, gentlemen?—Somebody take off the gentlemen's boots there.

Dor. Father! uncle! what is the meaning of this?

Mon. Barn. Here, show a room.—Or will you please to walk into the kitchen first, gentlemen, and see what you like for dinner.

La Gar. Make no preparation, sir; your own dinner is sufficient.

Mon. Barn. Very well, I understand ye. Let's see, how many are there of ye?—[*Counting them.*] One, two, three, four: well, gentlemen, 'tis but half-a-crown a-piece for yourselves, and sixpence a head for your servants; your dinner shall be ready in half an hour. Here, show the gentlemen into the Apollo.

La Rose. What, sir, does your father keep an inn?

Mon. Barn. The Sword Royal, at your service, sir.

Dor. But, father, let me speak to you; would you disgrace me?

Mon. Barn. My wine is very good, gentlemen, but, to be very plain with ye, it is dear.

Dor. Oh, I shall run distracted!

Mon. Barn. You seem not to like my house, gentlemen; you may try all the inns in the county, and not be better entertained; but I own my bills run high.

Dor. Gentlemen, let me beg the favour of ye.

La Gar. Ay, my young squire of the Sword Royal, you shall receive some favours from us!

Dor. Dear Monsieur La Garantière!

La Gar. Here, my horse there!

Dor. Monsieur La Rose!

La Rose. Damn ye, ye prig!

Dor. Monsieur Trofignac!

Trof. Go to the devil!

[*Exeunt Messieurs LA GARANTIERE, LA ROSE, and TROFIGNAC.*]

Dor. Oh, I'm disgraced for ever!

Mon. Barn. Now, son, this will teach you how to live.

Dor. Your son! I deny the kindred; I'm the son of a whore, and I'll burn your house about your ears, you old rogue you! [*Exit.*]

Mon. Barn. Ha! ha!—

Mon. Griff. The young gentleman's in a passion.

Mon. Barn. They're all gone for all that, and the Sword-Royal's the best general in Christendom.

Enter ERASTUS's Servant talking with LISETTA.

Lis. What, that tall gentleman I saw in the garden with ye?

Serv. The same, he's my master's uncle, and ranger of the king's forests. He intends to leave my master all he has.

Mon. Barn. Don't I know this scoundrel? What, is his master here!—What do you do here, rascal?

Serv. I was asking which must be my master's chamber.

Mon. Barn. Where is your master?

Serv. Above stairs with your wife and daughter; and I want to know where he's to lie, that I may put up his things.

Mon. Barn. Do you so, rascal?

Serv. A very handsome inn this.—Here, drawer, fetch me a pint of wine.

Mon. Barn. Take that, rascal; do you banter us? [*Kicks him out.*]

Enter Madame BARNARD.

Mad. Barn. What is the meaning of this, husband? Are not you ashamed to turn your house into an inn?—and is this a dress for my spouse, and a man of your character?

Mon. Barn. I'd rather wear this dress than be ruined.

Mad. Barn. You're nearer being so than you imagine; for there are some persons within who have it in their power to punish you for your ridiculous folly.

Enter ERASTUS, leading in MARIANNE.

Mon. Barn. How, sir, what means this? who sent you here?

Erast. It was the luckiest star in your firmament that sent me here.

Mon. Barn. Then I doubt, at my birth, the planets were but in a scurvy disposition.

Erast. Killing one of the king's stags, that run hither for refuge, is enough to overturn a fortune much better established than yours.—However, sir, if you will consent to give me your daughter, for her sake I will bear you harmless.

Mon. Barn. No, sir ; no man shall have my daughter, that won't take my house too.

Erast. Sir, I will take your house ; pay you the full value of it, and you shall remain as much master of it as ever.

Mon. Barn. No, sir, that won't do neither ; you must be master yourself, and from this minute

begin to do the honours of it in your own person.

Erast. Sir, I readily consent.

Mon. Barn. Upon that condition, and in order to get rid of my house, here, take my daughter.—And now, sir, if you think you've a hard bargain, I don't care if I toss you in my wife, to make you amends.

Well, then since all things thus are fairly sped,

My son in anger, and my daughter wed ;

My house disposed of, the sole cause of strife,

I now may hope to lead a happy life,

If I can part with my engaging wife.

[*Exeunt omnes*]

A JOURNEY TO LONDON.

A Comedy.

[UNFINISHED.]

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

SIR FRANCIS HEADPIECE, a Country Gentleman.
LORD LOVERULE.
SIR CHARLES.
UNCLE RICHARD, Uncle to SIR FRANCIS HEAD-
PIECE.
SQUIRE HUMPHRY, Son to SIR FRANCIS HEAD-
PIECE.
COLONEL COURTLY.
CAPTAIN TOUPEE.
JOHN MOODY, } Servants to SIR FRANCIS HEAD-
GEORGE, } PIECE.
TOM, }
JAMES, Servant to UNCLE RICHARD.
MONEYBAG, Steward to LORD LOVERULE.

SHORTYARD, a Mercer.

LADY HEADPIECE, Wife to SIR FRANCIS HEAD-
PIECE.
MISS BETTY, her Daughter.
LADY ARABELLA, Wife to LORD LOVERULE.
CLARINDA, a young unmarried Lady.
MRS. MOTHERLY, one that lets Lodgings.
MARTILLA, her Niece.
MRS. HANDY, Maid to LADY HEADPIECE.
DOLL TRIPE, Cookmaid to her Ladyship.
DEBORAH, Maid to MRS. MOTHERLY.
TRUSTY, Maid to LADY ARABELLA.

SCENE,—LONDON.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—A Room in UNCLE RICHARD'S House.

Enter UNCLE RICHARD.

Unc. Rich. What prudent cares does this deep foreseeing nation take for the support of its worshipful families! In order to which, and that they may not fail to be always significant and useful in their country, it is a settled foundation-point that every child that is born shall be a beggar, except one; and that he—shall be a fool. My grandfather was bred a fool, as the country report; my father was a fool, as my mother used to say; my brother was a fool, to my own knowledge, though a great justice of the peace; and he has left a son that will make his son a fool, or I am mistaken. The lad is now fourteen years old, and but just out of his Psalter. As to his honoured father, my much-esteemed nephew—here I have him.—[*Takes out a letter.*] In this profound epistle (which I have just now received) there is the top and bottom of him. Forty years and two is the age of him; in which it is computed, by his butler, his own person has drank two-and-thirty tun of ale. The rest of his time has been employed in persecuting all the poor four-legged creatures round that would but run away fast enough from him, to give him the high-mettled pleasure of running after them. In this noble employ he has broke his right arm, his

left leg, and both his collar-bones. Once he broke his neck, but that did him no harm; a nimble hedge-leaper, a brother of the stirrup, that was by, whipped off his horse and mended it. His estate being left him with two jointures and three weighty mortgages upon it, he, to make all easy, and pay his brother's and sister's portions, married a profuse young housewife for love, with never a penny of money. Having done all this, like his brave ancestors, for the support of the family, he now finds children and interest-money make such a bawling about his ears, that he has taken the friendly advice of his neighbour, the good lord Courtlove, to run his estate two thousand pounds more in debt, that he may retrieve his affairs by being a parliament-man, and bringing his wife to London to play off a hundred pounds at dice with ladies of quality before breakfast. But let me read this wiseacre's letter once over again.—[*Reads.*] *Most honoured uncle, I do not doubt but you have much rejoiced at my success in my election. It has cost me some money, I own; but what of all that! I am a parliament-man, and that will set all to rights. I have lived in the country all my days, 'tis true; but what then! I have made speeches at the sessions, and in the vestry too, and can elsewhere, perhaps, as well as some others that do; and I have a noble friend hard by, who has let me into some small knowledge of what's what at West-*

minster. And so, that I may be always at hand to serve my country, I have consulted with my wife about taking a house at London, and bringing her and my family up to town; which, her opinion is, will be the rightest thing in the world.—My wife's opinion about bringing her to London!—I'll read no more of thee—beast!

[Strikes the letter down with his stick.]

Enter JAMES hastily.

James. Sir, sir! do you hear the news? They are all a-coming.

Unc. Rich. Ay, sirrah, I hear it, with a pox to it!

James. Sir, here's John Moody arrived already; he's stumping about the streets in his dirty boots, and asking every man he meets, if they can tell where he may have a good lodging for a parliament-man, till he can hire such a house as becomes him. He tells them his lady and all the family are coming too; and that they are so nobly attended they care not a fig for anybody. Sir, they have added two cart-horses to the four old geldings, because my lady will have it said she came to town in her coach-and-six; and—ha! ha!—heavy George the ploughman rides postilion!

Unc. Rich. Very well; the journey begins as it should do.—James!

James. Sir!

Unc. Rich. Dost know whether they bring all the children with them?

James. Only Squire Humphry and Miss Betty, sir; the other six are put to board at half-a-crown a week a head, with Joan Growse at Smoke-dung-hill-farm.

Unc. Rich. The Lord have mercy upon all good folks! what work will these people make! Dost know when they'll be here?

James. John says, sir, they'd have been here last night, but that the old wheezy-belly horse tired, and the two fore-wheels came crash down at once in Waggonrut-lane. Sir, they were cruelly loaden, as I understand; my lady herself, he says, laid on four mail-trunks, besides the great deal-box, which fat Tom sate upon behind.

Unc. Rich. So!

James. Then within the coach there was Sir Francis, my lady, the great fat lapdog, Squire Humphry, Miss Betty, my lady's maid, Mrs. Handy, and Doll Tripe the cook; but she puked with sitting backward, so they mounted her into the coach-box.

Unc. Rich. Very well.

James. Then, sir, for fear of a famine before they should get to the baiting-place, there was such baskets of plum-cake, Dutch-gingerbread, Cheshire-cheese, Naples biscuits, maccaroons, neats'-tongues, and cold boiled beef;—and in case of sickness, such bottles of usquebaugh, black-cherry brandy, cinnamon-water, sack, tent, and strong-beer, as made the old coach crack again.

Unc. Rich. Well said!

James. And for defence of this good cheer and my lady's little pearl necklace, there was the family basket-hilt sword, the great Turkish cimeter, the old blunderbuss, a good bag of bullets, and a great horn of gunpowder.

Unc. Rich. Admirable!

James. Then for handboxes, they were so be-piled up—to sir Francis's nose, that he could only peep out at a chance hole with one eye, as if

he were viewing the country through a perspective-glass.—But, sir, if you please, I'll go look after John Moody a little, for fear of accidents; for he never was in London before, you know, but one week, and then he was kidnapped into a house of ill repute, where he exchanged all his money and clothes for a—um! So I'll go look after him, sir.

[Exit.]

Unc. Rich. Nay, I don't doubt but this wise expedition will be attended with more adventures than one. This noble head and supporter of his family will, as an honest country gentleman, get credit enough amongst the tradesmen, to run so far in debt in one session, as will make him just fit for a jail when he's dropped at the next election. He will make speeches in the house, to show the government of what importance he can be to them, by which they will see he can be of no importance at all; and he will find, in time, that he stands valued at (if he votes right) being sometimes—invited to dinner! Then his wife (who has ten times more of a jade about her than she yet knows of) will so improve in this rich soil, she will, in one month, learn every vice the finest lady in the town can teach her. She will be extremely courteous to the fops who make love to her in jest, and she will be extremely grateful to those who do it in earnest. She will visit all ladies that will let her into their houses, and she will run in debt to all the shopkeepers that will let her into their books. In short, before her husband has got five pound by a speech at Westminster, she will have lost five hundred at cards and dice in the parish of St. James's.—Wife and family to London with a pox!

[Exit.]

SCENE II.—A Room in Mrs. MOTHERLY'S House.

Enter JAMES, and JOHN MOODY.

James. Dear John Moody, I am so glad to see you in London once more.

John. And I you, dear Mr. James. Give me a kiss.—Why that's friendly.

James. I wish they had been so, John, that you met with when you were here before.

John. Ah—murrain upon all rogues and whores! I say. But I am grown so cunning now, the deel himself can't handle me. I have made a notable bargain for these lodgings here, we are to pay but five pounds a-week, and have all the house to ourselves.

James. Where are the people that belong to it to be then?

John. Oh! there's only the gentlewoman, her two maids, and a cousin, a very pretty, civil young woman truly, and the maids are the merriest grigs—

James. Have a care, John.

John. Oh, fear nothing; we did so play together last night.

James. Hush! here comes my master.

Enter UNCLE RICHARD.

Unc. Rich. What! John has taken these lodgings, has he?

James. Yes, sir, he has taken 'em.

[Exit.]

Unc. Rich. O John! how dost do, honest John? I am glad to see thee with all my heart.

John. I humbly thank your worship. I'm staut still, and a faithful awd servant to th' family. Heaven prosper aw that belong to't.

Unc. Rich. What, they are all upon the road?

John. As mony as the awd coach would hauld, sir: the Lord send 'em well to tawn.

Unc. Rich. And well out on't again, John, ha!

John. Ah, sir! you are a wise man, so am I: home's home, I say. I wish we get any good here. I's sure we ha' got little upo' the road. Some mischief or other aw the day long. Slap! goes one thing, crack! goes another; my lady cries out for driving fast; the awd cattle are for going slow; Roger whips, they stand still and kick; nothing but a sort of a contradiction aw the journey long. My lady would gladly have been here last night, sir, though there were no lodgings got; but her ladyship said, she did naw care for that, she'd lie in the inn where the horses stood, as long as it was in London.

Unc. Rich. These ladies, these ladies, John!—

John. Ah, sir, I have seen a little of 'em, though not so much as my betters. Your worship is naw married yet?

Unc. Rich. No, John, no; I am an old bache-
lor still.

John. Heavens bless you, and preserve you, sir.

Unc. Rich. I think you have lost your good woman, John?

John. No, sir, that have I not; Bridget sticks to me still, sir. She was for coming to London too, but, no, says I, there may be mischief enough done without you.

Unc. Rich. Why that was bravely spoken, John, and like a man.

John. Sir, were my measter but hafe the mon that I am, gadswookers—though he'll speak stautly too sometimes, but then he canno hawd it; no, he canno hawd it.

Enter DEBORAH.

Deb. Mr. Moody, Mr. Moody, here's the coach come.

John. Already! no sure.

Deb. Yes, yes, it's at the door, they are getting out; my mistress is run to receive 'em.

John. And so will I, as in duty bound.

[Exit with DEBORAH.]

Unc. Rich. And I will stay here, not being in duty bound to do the honours of this house.

Enter Sir FRANCIS HEADPIECE, Lady HEADPIECE, Squire HUMPHRY, Miss BETTY, Mrs. HANDY, JOHN MOODY, and Mrs. MOTHERLY.

Lady Head. Do you hear, Moody, let all the things be first laid down here, and then carried where they'll be used.

John. They shall, an't please your ladyship.

Lady Head. What, my Uncle Richard here to receive us! This is kind indeed: sir, I am extremely glad to see you.

Unc. Rich. *[Salutes her.]* Niece, your servant.—*[Aside.]* I am extremely sorry to see you in the worst place I know in the world for a good woman to grow better in.—*[Aloud.]* Nephew, I am your servant too; but I don't know how to bid you welcome.

Sir Fran. I am sorry for that, sir.

Unc. Rich. Nay, 'tis for your own sake: I'm not concerned.

Sir Fran. I hope, uncle, I shall give you such

weighty reasons for what I have done, as shall convince you I am a prudent man.

Unc. Rich. That wilt thou never convince me of, whilst thou shalt live. *[Aside.]*

Sir Fran. Here, Humphry, come up to your uncle.—Sir, this is your godson.

Squire Hum. Honoured uncle and godfather, I crave leave to ask your blessing. *[Kneels.]*

Unc. Rich. *[Aside.]* Thou art a numskull I see already.—*[Puts his hand on his head.]* There, thou hast it. And if it will do thee any good, may it be to make thee, at least, as wise a man as thy father.

Lady Head. Miss Betty, don't you see your Uncle?

Unc. Rich. And for thee, my dear, mayst thou be, at least, as good a woman as thy mother.

Miss Bet. I wish I may ever be so handsome, sir.

Unc. Rich. Ha! Miss Pert! now that's a thought that seems to have been hatched in the girl on this side Highgate. *[Aside.]*

Sir Fran. Her tongue is a little nimble, sir.

Lady Head. That's only from her country education, sir Francis, she has been kept there too long; I therefore brought her to London, sir, to learn more reserve and modesty.

Unc. Rich. Oh, the best place in the world for it! Every woman she meets will teach her something of it. There's the good gentlewoman of the house looks like a knowing person, even she perhaps will be so good to read her a lesson, now and then, upon that subject.—*[Aside.]* An arrant bawd, or I have no skill in physiognomy!

Mrs. Moth. Alas, sir, miss won't stand long in need of my poor instructions; if she does, they'll be always at her service.

Lady Head. Very obliging indeed, Mrs. Motherly.

Sir Fran. Very kind and civil truly; I believe we are got into a mighty good house here.

Unc. Rich. *[Aside.]* For good business very probable.—*[Aloud.]* Well, niece, your servant for to-night; you have a great deal of affairs upon your hands here, so I won't hinder you.

Lady Head. I believe, sir, I shan't have much less every day, while I stay in this town, of one sort or other.

Unc. Rich. Why, 'tis a town of much action indeed.

Miss Bet. And my mother did not come to it to be idle, sir.

Unc. Rich. Nor you neither, I dare say, young mistress.

Miss Bet. I hope not, sir.

Unc. Rich. Um! miss Mettle.—*[Going, Sir FRANCIS following him.]* Where are you going, nephew?

Sir Fran. Only to attend you to the door, sir.

Unc. Rich. Phu! no ceremony with me; you'll find I shall use none with you or your family.

Sir Fran. I must do as you command me, sir.

[Exit UNCLE RICHARD.]

Miss Bet. This uncle Richard, papa, seems but a crusty sort of an old fellow.

Sir Fran. He is a little odd, child; but you must be very civil to him, for he has a great deal of money, and nobody knows who he may give it to.

Lady Head. Phu, a fig for his money! you have so many projects of late about money, since you are a parliament-man, we must make ourselves

slaves to his testy humours, seven years perhaps, in hopes to be his heirs; and then he'll be just old enough to marry his maid.—But pray let us take care of our things here: are they all brought in yet?

Mrs. Hand. Almost, my lady; there are only some of the bandboxes behind, and a few odd things.

Lady Head. Let 'em be fetched in presently.

Mrs. Hand. They are here.—Come, bring the things in.

Enter Servant.

Is there all yet?

Serv. All but the great basket of apples, and the goose-pye.

Enter DOLL TRIPE.

Doll. Ah, my lady! we're aw undone; the goose-pye's gwon.

All. Gone?

Sir Fran. The goose-pye gone? how?

Doll. Why, sir, I had got it fast under my arm to bring it in, but being almost dark, up comes two of these thin starved London rogues, one gives me a great kick o' the—here; [*Laying her hand upon her backside.*] while t'other hungry varlet twitched the dear pye out of my hands, and away they run down street like two greyhounds. I cried out fire! but heavy George and fat Tom are after 'em with a vengeance; they'll sauce their jackets for 'em, I'll warrant 'em.

Enter GEORGE with a bloody face, and TOM.

So, have you catched 'em?

George. Catched em! the gallows catch 'em for me! I had naw run hafe the length of our bearn, before somewhat fetched me such a wherry across the shins, that dawn came I flop o' my feace all along in the channel, and thought I should ne'er ha' gotten up again; but Tom has skaward after them, and cried murder as he'd been stuck.

Tom. Yes, and straight upo' that, swap comes somewhat across my forehead, with such a force, that dawn came I like an ox.

Squire Hum. So, the poor pye's quite gone then!

Tom. Gone, young measter! yeaten I believe by this time. These I suppose are what they call sharpeners in this country.

Squire Hum. It was a rare good pye.

Doll. As e'er these hands put pepper to.

Lady Head. Pray Mrs. Motherly, do they make a practice of these things often here?

Mrs. Moth. Madam, they'll twitch a rump of beef out of a boiling copper; and for a silver tankard, they make no more conscience of that, than if it were a Tunbridge sugar-box.

Sir Fran. I wish the coach and horses, George, were safe got to the inn. Do you and Roger take special care that nobody runs away with them, as you go thither.

George. I believe, sir, our cattle woant yeasily be run away with to-night; but weest take best care we con of them, poor sauls! [*Exit.*]

Sir Fran. Do so, pray now.

Squire Hum. Feather, I had rather they had run away with heavy George than the goose-pye, a slice of it before supper to night would have been pure.

Lady Head. This boy is always thinking of his belly.

Sir Fran. But, my dear, you may allow him to be a little hungry after a journey.

Lady Head. Pray, good sir Francis, he has been constantly eating in the coach, and out of the coach, above seven hours this day. I wish my poor girl could eat a quarter as much.

Miss Bet. Mama, I could eat a good deal more than I do, but then I should grow fat mayhap, like him, and spoil my shape.

Lady Head. Mrs. Motherly, will you be so kind to tell them where they shall carry the things?

Mrs. Moth. Madam, I'll do the best I can: I doubt our closets will scarce hold 'em all, but we have garrets and cellars, which, with the help of hiring a store-room, I hope may do.—[*To TOM.*] Sir, will you be so good to help my maids a little in carrying away the things?

Tom. With all my heart, forsooth, if I con but see my way; but these whoresons have awmost knocked my eyen awt. [*They carry off the things.*]

Mrs. Moth. Will your ladyship please to refresh yourself with a dish of tea, after your fatigue? I think I have pretty good.

Lady Head. If you please, Mrs. Motherly.

[*Exit MRS. MOTHERLY.*]

Squire Hum. Would not a good tankard of strong beer, nutmeg, and sugar, do better, feather, with a toast and some cheese?

Sir Fran. I think it would, son.—Here, John Moody, get us a tankard of good hearty stuff presently.

John. Sir, here's Norfolk-nog to be had at next door.

Squire Hum. That's best of all, feather; but make haste with it, John. [*Exit JOHN MOODY.*]

Lady Head. Well, I wonder, Sir Francis, you will encourage that lad to swill his guts thus with such beastly, lubberly liquor: if it were burgundy, or champagne, something might be said for't; they'd perhaps give him some wit and spirit; but such heavy, muddy stuff as this will make him quite stupid.

Sir Fran. Why you know, my dear, I have drank good ale and strong beer these thirty years, and by your permission I don't know that I want wit.

Miss Bet. But you might have had more, papa, if you had been governed by my mother.

Re-enter JOHN MOODY, with a tankard, &c.

Sir Fran. Daughter, he that is governed by his wife, has no wit at all.

Miss Bet. Then I hope I shall marry a fool, father, for I shall love to govern dearly.

Sir Fran. Here, Humphry, here's to thee.—[*Drinks.*] You are too pert, child, it don't do well in a young woman.

Lady Head. Pray, sir Francis, don't snub her, she has a fine growing spirit, and if you check her so, you'll make her as dull as her brother there.

Squire Hum. Indeed, mother, I think my sister is too forward. [*After drinking a long draught.*]

Miss Bet. You, you think I'm too forward! what have you to do to think, brother Heavy? you are too fat to think of anything but your belly.

Lady Head. Well said, miss; he's none of your master, though he's your elder brother.

Re-enter GEORGE.

George. Sir, I have no good opinion of this tawne, it's made up of mischief, I think.

Sir Fran. Why, what's the matter now?

George. I've tell your worship; before we were gotten to the street end, a great luggerheaded cart,

with wheels as thick as a good brick wall, laid hawl of the coach, and has pood it aw to bits. An this be London, wa'd we were all weel i'th' country again.

Miss Bet. What have you to do, sir, to wish us all in the country again, lubber? I hope we shan't go in the country again these seven years, mama, let twenty coaches be pulled to pieces.

Sir Fran. Hold your tongue, Betty.—[*To GEORGE.*] Was Roger in no fault in this?

George. No, sir, nor I neither. Are not you ashamed, says Roger to the carter, to do such an unkind thing to strangers? No, says he, you bumpkin.—Sir, he did the thing on very purpose, and so the folks said that stood by; but they said your worship need na be concerned, for you might have a lawsuit with him when you pleased, that would not cost you above a hundred pounds, and mayhap you might get the better of him.

Sir Fran. I'll try what I can do with him, egad, I'll make such—

Squire Hum. Feather, have him before the parliament.

Sir Fran. And so I will: I'll make him know who I am. Where does he live?

George. I believe in London, sir.

Sir Fran. What's the villain's name?

George. I think I heard somebody call him Dick.

Sir Fran. Where did he go?

George. Sir, he went home.

Sir Fran. Where's that?

George. By my troth I do naw know. I heard him say he had nothing more to do with us to-night, and so he'd go home and smoke a pipe.

Lady Head. Come, sir Francis, don't put yourself in a heat, accidents will happen to people in travelling abroad to see the world. Eat your supper heartily, go to bed, sleep quietly, and to-morrow see if you can buy a handsome second-hand coach for present use, bespeak a new one, and then all's easy. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.—*Another Room in the same.*

Enter COLONEL COURTLY.

Col. Who's that, Deborah?

Enter DEBORAH.

Deb. At your service, sir.

Col. What, do you keep open house here? I found the street door as wide as it could gape.

Deb. Sir, we are all in a bustle, we have lodgers come in to-night, the house full.

Col. Where's your mistress?

Deb. Prodigious busy with her company; but I'll tell Mrs. Martilla you are here, I believe she'll come to you.

Col. That will do as well.—[*Exit DEBORAH.*] Poor Martilla! she's a very good girl, and I have loved her a great while. I think six months it is, since, like a merciless highwayman, I made her deliver all she had about her; she begged hard, poor thing, I'd leave her one small bauble. Had I let her keep it, I believe she had still kept me. Could women but refuse their ravenous lovers that one dear destructive moment, how long might they reign over them!—But for a bane to both their joys and ours, when they have indulged us with such favours as to make us adore them, they are not able to refuse us that one which puts an end to our devotion.

Enter MARTILLA.

Martilla, how dost thou do, my child?

Mar. As well as a losing gamester can.

Col. Why, what have you lost?

Mar. I have lost you.

Col. How came you to lose me?

Mar. By losing myself.

Col. We can be friends still.

Mar. Dull ones.

Col. Useful ones perhaps. Shall I help thee to a good husband?

Mar. Not if I were rich enough to live without one.

Col. I'm sorry I am not rich enough to make thee so; but we won't talk of melancholy things. Who are these folks your aunt has got in her house?

Mar. One sir Francis Headpiece and his lady, with a son and daughter.

Col. Headpiece! cotsso, I know 'em a little. I met with 'em at a race in the country two years since; a sort of blockhead, is not he?

Mar. So they say.

Col. His wife seemed a mettled gentlewoman, if she had had but a fair field to range in.

Mar. That she won't want now, for they stay in town the whole winter.

Col. Oh, that will do to show all her parts in.

Enter MRS. MOTHERLY.

How do you do, my old acquaintance?

Mrs. Moth. At your service you know always, colonel.

Col. I hear you have got good company in the house.

Mrs. Moth. I hope it will prove so; he's a parliament man only, colonel, you know there's some danger in that.

Col. Oh, never fear, he'll pay his landlady, though he don't pay his butcher.

Mrs. Moth. His wife's a clever woman.

Col. So she is.

Mrs. Moth. How do you know?

Col. I have seen her in the country, and I begin to think I'll visit her in town.

Mrs. Moth. You begin to look like a rogue.

Col. What, your wicked fancies are stirring already?

Mrs. Moth. Yours are, or I'm mistaken. But—I'll have none of your pranks played upon her.

Col. Why she's no girl, she can defend herself.

Mrs. Moth. But what if she won't?

Col. Why, then, she can blame neither you nor me.

Mrs. Moth. You'll never be quiet till you get my windows broke; but I must go and attend my lodgers, so good night.

Col. Do so, and give my service to my lady, and tell her, if she'll give me leave, I'll do myself the honour to-morrow to come and tender my services to her, as long as she stays in town.—[*Aside.*] If it ben't too long.

Mrs. Moth. I'll tell her what a devil you are, and advise her to have a care of you.

Col. Do, that will make her every time she sees me think of what I'd be at.—[*Exit MRS. MOTHERLY.*] Dear Martilla, good night, I know you won't be my hindrance; I'll do you as good a turn some time or other. Well, I am so glad, you don't love me too much.

Mar. When that's our fate, as too, too oft we prove,

How bitterly we pay the past delights of love!

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A Room in Lord LOVERULE's House.*

Enter Lord LOVERULE and Lady ARABELLA.

Lady Ara. Well, look you, my lord, I can bear it no longer; nothing still but about my faults, my faults! an agreeable subject truly!

Lord Love. But, madam, if you won't hear of your faults, how is it likely you should ever mend 'em?

Lady Ara. Why, I don't intend to mend 'em. I can't mend 'em, I have told you so a hundred times; you know I have tried to do it, over and over, and it hurts me so I can't bear it. Why, don't you know, my lord, that whenever (just to please you only) I have gone about to wean myself from a fault (one of my faults I mean that I love dearly), han't it put me so out of humour you could scarce endure the house with me?

Lord Love. Look you, my dear, it is very true, that in weaning one's self from—

Lady Ara. Weaning! why, ay, don't you see, that even in weaning poor children from the nurse it's almost the death of 'em? and don't you see your true religious people, when they go about to wean themselves, and have solemn days of fasting and praying, on purpose to help them, does it not so disorder them, there's no coming near 'em; are they not as cross as the devil? and then they don't do the business neither; for next day their faults are just where they were the day before.

Lord Love. But, madam, can you think it a reasonable thing to be abroad till two o'clock in the morning, when you know I go to bed at eleven?

Lady Ara. And can you think it a wise thing (to talk your own way now) to go to bed at eleven, when you know I am likely to disturb you by coming there at three?

Lord Love. Well, the manner of women's living of late is insupportable, and some way or other—

Lady Ara. It's to be mended, I suppose.—Pray, my lord, one word of fair argument. You complain of my late hours; I of your early ones; so far we are even, you'll allow. But which gives us the best figure in the eye of the polite world? My two o'clock speaks life, activity, spirit, and vigour; your eleven has a dull, drowsy, stupid, good-for-nothing sound with it. It savours much of a mechanic, who must get to bed betimes that he may rise early to open his shop, faugh!

Lord Love. I thought to go to bed early and rise so, was ever esteemed a right practice for all people.

Lady Ara. Beasts do it.

Lord Love. Fy, fy, madam, fy! But 'tis not your ill hours alone disturb me; but the ill company who occasion those ill hours.

Lady Ara. And pray what ill company may those be?

Lord Love. Why, women that lose their money, and men that win it: especially when 'tis to be paid out of their husband's estate; or if that fail, and the creditor be a little pressing, the lady will perhaps be obliged to try if the gentleman, instead of gold, will accept of a trinket.

Lady Ara. My lord, you grow scurrilous, and you'll make me hate you. I'll have you to know I keep company with the politest people in the town, and the assemblies I frequent are full of such.

Lord Love. So are the churches now and then.

Lady Ara. My friends frequent them often, as well as the assemblies.

Lord Love. They would do it oftener, if a groom of the chamber there were allowed to furnish cards and dice to the company.

Lady Ara. You'd make a woman mad!

Lord Love. You'd make a man a fool.

Lady Ara. If Heaven has made you otherwise, that won't be in my power.

Lord Love. I'll try if I can prevent your making me a beggar at least.

Lady Ara. A beggar! Croesus! I'm out of patience!—I won't come home till four to-morrow morning.

Lord Love. I'll order the doors to be locked at twelve.

Lady Ara. Then I won't come home till to-morrow night.

Lord Love. Then you shall never come home again, madam. [Exit.]

Lady Ara. There he has knocked me down. My father upon our marriage said, wives were come to that pass, he did not think it fit they should be trusted with pin-money, and so would not let this man settle one penny upon his poor wife, to serve her at a dead lift for separate maintenance.

Enter CLARINDA.

Clar. Good-morrow, madam; how do you do to-day? you seem to be in a little fluster.

Lady Ara. My lord has been in one, and as I am the most complaisant poor creature in the world, I put myself into one too, purely to be suitable company to him.

Clar. You are prodigious good; but surely it must be mighty agreeable when a man and his wife can give themselves the same turn of conversation.

Lady Ara. Oh, the prettiest thing in the world!

Clar. But yet, though I believe there's no life so happy as a married one, in the main; yet I fancy, where two people are so very much together, they must often be in want of something to talk upon.

Lady Ara. Clarinda, you are the most mistaken in the world; married people have things to talk of, child, that never enter into the imagination of others. Why now, here's my lord and I, we han't been married above two short years, you know, and we have already eight or ten things constantly in bank, that whenever we want company, we can talk of any one of them for two hours together, and the subject never the flatter. It will be as fresh next day, if we have occasion for it, as it was the first day it entertained us.

Clar. Why that must be wonderful pretty.

Lady Ara. Oh, there's no life like it! This very day now, for example, my lord and I, after a pretty cheerful tête-à-tête dinner, sat down by the fireside, in an idle, indolent, picktooth way for a while, as if we had not thought of one another's

being in the room. At last (stretching himself, and yawning twice), my dear, says he, you came home very late last night. 'Twas but two in the morning, says I. I was in bed (yawning) by eleven, says he. So you are every night, says I. Well, says he, I am amazed how you can sit up so late. How can you be amazed, says I, at a thing that happens so often? Upon which we entered into conversation. And though this is a point has entertained us above fifty times already, we always find so many pretty new things to say upon't, that I believe in my soul it will last as long as we live.

Clar. But in such sort of family dialogues (though extremely well for passing of time) don't there now and then enter some little witty sort of bitterness?

Lady Ara. O yes; which don't do amiss at all, a little something that's sharp, moderates the extreme sweetness of matrimonial society, which would else perhaps be cloying. Though to tell you the truth, Clarinda, I think we squeezed a little too much lemon into it this bout; for it grew so sour at last, that I think I almost told him he was a fool; and he talked something oddly of turning me out of doors.

Clar. Oh, but have a care of that!

Lady Ara. Why, to be serious, Clarinda, what would you have a woman do in my case? There is no one thing he can do in this world to please me—except giving me money; and that he is growing weary of; and I at the same time (partly by nature, and partly perhaps by keeping the best company) do with my soul love almost everything that he hates. I dote upon assemblies, adore masquerades, my heart bounds at a ball; I love play to distraction, cards enchant me, and dice—put me out of my little wits.—Dear, dear hazard, what music there is in the rattle of the dice, compared to a sleepy opera! Do you ever play at hazard, Clarinda?

Clar. Never; I don't think it sits well upon women; it's very masculine, and has too much of a rake; you see how it makes the men swear and curse. Sure it must incline the women to do the same too, if they durst give way to it.

Lady Ara. So it does; but hitherto, for a little decency, we keep it in; and when, in spite of our teeth, an oath gets into our mouths, we swallow it.

Clar. That's enough to burst you; but in time perhaps you'll let 'em fly as they do.

Lady Ara. Why 'tis probable we may, for the pleasure of all polite women's lives now, you know, is founded upon entire liberty to do what they will. But shall I tell you what happened t'other night? Having lost all my money but ten melancholy guineas, and throwing out for them, what do you think slipped from me?

Clar. An oath?

Lady Ara. Gud soon!

Clar. O Lord! O Lord! did not it frighten you out of your wits?

Lady Ara. Clarinda, I thought a gun had gone off.—But I forget, you are a prude, and design to live soberly.

Clar. Why 'tis true; both my nature and education do in a good degree incline me that way.

Lady Ara. Well, surely to be sober is to be terribly dull. You will marry, won't you?

Clar. I can't tell but I may.

Lady Ara. And you'll live in town?

Clar. Half the year I should like it very well.

Lady Ara. And you would live in London half a year, to be sober in it?

Clar. Yes.

Lady Ara. Why can't you as well go and be sober in the country?

Clar. So I would the t'other half year.

Lady Ara. And pray what pretty scheme of life would you form now, for your summer and winter sober entertainments?

Clar. A scheme that, I think, might very well content us.

Lady Ara. Let's hear it.

Clar. I could in summer pass my time very agreeably, in riding soberly, in walking soberly, in sitting under a tree soberly, in gardening soberly, in reading soberly, in hearing a little music soberly, in conversing with some agreeable friends soberly, in working soberly, in managing my family and children (if I had any) soberly, and possibly by these means I might induce my husband to be as sober as myself.

Lady Ara. Well, Clarinda, thou art a most contemptible creature. But let's have the sober town scheme too, for I'm charmed with the country one.

Clar. You shall, and I'll try to stick to my sobriety there too.

Lady Ara. If you do, you'll make me sick of you. But let's hear it however.

Clar. I would entertain myself in observing the new fashions soberly, I would please myself in new clothes soberly, I would divert myself with agreeable friends at home and abroad soberly, I would play at quadrille soberly, I would go to court soberly, I would go to some plays soberly, I would go to operas soberly, and I think I could go once, or, if I liked my company, twice to a masquerade soberly.

Lady Ara. If it had not been for that last piece of sobriety, I was going to call for some surfeit-water.

Clar. Why don't you think, that with the further aid of breakfasting, dining, supping, and sleeping (not to say a word of devotion), the four-and-twenty hours might roll over in a tolerable manner?

Lady Ara. How I detest that word, tolerable! And so will a country relation of ours, that's newly come to town, or I'm mistaken.

Clar. Who is that?

Lady Ara. Even my dear lady Headpiece.

Clar. Is she come?

Lady Ara. Yes, her sort of a tolerable husband has gotten to be chosen parliament-man at some simple town or other, upon which she has persuaded him to bring her and her folks up to London.

Clar. That's good; I think she was never here before.

Lady Ara. Not since she was nine years old; but she has had an outrageous mind to it ever since she was married.

Clar. Then she'll make the most of it, I suppose, now she is come,

Lady Ara. Depend upon that.

Clar. We must go and visit her.

Lady Ara. By all means; and may be you'll have a mind to offer her your tolerable scheme for her London diversion this winter; if you do,

mistress, I'll show her mine too, and you shall see she'll so despise you and adore me, that if I do but chirrup to her, she'll hop after me like a tame sparrow, the town round. But there's your admirer I see coming in, I'll oblige him, and leave you to receive part of his visit, while I step up to write a letter. Besides, to tell you the truth, I don't like him half so well as I used to do; he falls off of late from being the company he was, in our way. In short, I think he's growing to be a little like my lord. *[Exit.]*

Enter Sir CHARLES.

Sir Char. Madam, your servant; they told me lady Arabella was here.

Clar. She's only stepped up to write a letter; she'll come down presently.

Sir Char. Why, does she write letters? I thought she had never time for't: pray how may she have disposed of the rest of the day?

Clar. A good deal as usual; she has visits to make till six; she's then engaged to the play; from that till court-time she's to be at cards at Mrs. Idle's; after the drawing-room she takes a short supper with lady Hazard, and from thence they go together to the assembly.

Sir Char. And are you to do all this with her?

Clar. The visits and the play, no more.

Sir Char. And how can you forbear all the rest?

Clar. 'Tis easy to forbear what we are not very fond of.

Sir Char. I han't found it so. I have passed much of my life in this hurry of the ladies, yet was never so pleased as when I was at quiet without 'em.

Clar. What then induced you to be with 'em?

Sir Char. Idleness and the fashion.

Clar. No mistresses in the case?

Sir Char. To speak honestly, yes. When one is in a toyshop, there was no forbearing the baubles; so I was perpetually engaging with some coquette or other, whom I could love perhaps just enough to put it into her power to plague me.

Clar. Which power I suppose she sometimes made use of.

Sir Char. The amours of a coquette, madam, generally mean nothing farther; I look upon them and prudes to be nuisances much alike, though they seem very different: the first are always disturbing the men, and the latter always abusing the women.

Clar. And all I think is to establish the character of being virtuous.

Sir Char. That is, being chaste they mean, for they know no other virtue; therefore indulge themselves in everything else that's vicious; they (against nature) keep their chastity only because they find more pleasure in doing mischief with it than they should have in parting with it. But, madam, if both these characters are so odious, how highly to be valued is that woman who can attain all they aim at without the aid of the folly or vice of either!

Re-enter Lady ARABELLA.

Lady Ara. Your servant, sir. I won't ask your pardon for leaving you alone a little with a lady that I know shares so much of your good opinion.

Sir Char. I wish, madam, she could think my good opinion of value enough to afford me a small part in hers.

Lady Ara. I believe, sir, every woman, who

knows she has a place in a fine gentleman's good opinion, will be glad to give him one in hers if she can. But however you two may stand in one another's, you must take another time if you desire to talk farther about it, or we shan't have enough to make our visits in; and so your servant, sir.—Come, Clarinda.

Sir Char. I'll stay and make my lord a visit, if you will give me leave.

Lady Ara. You have my leave, sir, though you were a lady. *[Exit with CLARINDA.]*

Re-enter Lord LOVERULE.

Lord Love. Sir Charles, your servant;—what, have the ladies left you?

Sir Char. Yes; and the ladies in general I hope will leave me too.

Lord Love. Why so?

Sir Char. That I mayn't be put to the ill-manners of leaving them first.

Lord Love. Do you then already find your gallantry inclining to an ebb?

Sir Char. 'Tis not that I am yet old enough to justify myself in an idle retreat, but I have got, I think, a sort of surfeit on me that lessens much the force of female charms.

Lord Love. Have you then been so glutted with their favours?

Sir Char. Not with their favours, but with their service; it is unmerciful. I once thought myself a tolerable time-killer; I drank, I played, I intrigued, and yet I had hours enow for reasonable uses; but he that will list himself a lady's man of metal now, she'll work him so at cards and dice, she won't afford him time enough to play with her at anything else, though she herself should have a tolerable good mind to it.

Lord Love. And so the disorderly lives they lead make you incline to a reform of your own.

Sir Char. 'Tis true; for bad examples (if they are but bad enough) give us as useful reflections as good ones do.

Lord Love. 'Tis pity anything that's bad should come from women.

Sir Char. 'Tis so indeed; and there was a happy time when both you and I thought there never could.

Lord Love. Our early first conceptions of them, I well remember, were, that they never could be vicious, nor never could be old.

Sir Char. We thought so then; the beauteous form we saw them cast in, seemed designed a habitation for no vice, nor no decay; all I had conceived of angels I conceived of them; true, tender, gentle, modest, generous, constant, I thought was writ in every feature; and in my devotions, Heaven, how did I adore thee, that blessings like them should be the portion of such poor inferior creatures as I took myself and all men else (compared with them) to be!—But where's that adoration now?

Lord Love. 'Tis with such fond young fools as you and I were then.

Sir Char. And with such it ever will be.

Lord Love. Ever. The pleasure is so great in believing women to be what we wish them, that nothing but a long and sharp experience can ever make us think them otherwise. That experience, friend, both you and I have had; but yours has been at other men's expense; mine—at my own.

Sir Char. Perhaps you'd wonder should you find me disposed to run the risk of that experience too.

Lord Love. I should indeed.

Sir Char. And yet 'tis possible I may; know, at least, I still have so much of my early folly left, to think there's yet one woman fit to make a wife of. How far such a one can answer the charms of a mistress, married men are silent in, so pass—for that, I'd take my chance; but could she make a home easy to her partner, by letting him find there a cheerful companion, an agreeable intimate, a useful assistant, a faithful friend, and (in its time perhaps) a tender mother, such change of life, from what I lead, seems not unwise to think of.

Lord Love. Not unwise to purchase, if to be had for millions; but—

Sir Char. But what?

Lord Love. If the reverse of this should chance to be the bitter disappointment, what would the life be then?

Sir Char. A damned one.

Lord Love. And what relief?

Sir Char. A short one; leave it, and return to that you left, if you can't find a better.

Lord Love. [*Aside.*] He says right.—That's the remedy, and a just one.—For if I sell my li-

berty for gold, and I am foully paid in brass, shall I be held to keep the bargain?

Sir Char. What are you thinking of?

Lord Love. Of what you have said.

Sir Char. And was it well said?

Lord Love. I begin to think it might.

Sir Char. Think on, 'twill give you ease.—The man who has courage enough to part with a wife, need not much dread the having one; and he that has not ought to tremble at being a husband.—But perhaps I have said too much; you'll pardon, however, the freedom of an old friend, because you know I am so; so your servant.

Lord Love. Charles, farewell! I can take nothing as ill meant that comes from you.—[*Exit Sir CHARLES.*] Nor ought my wife to think I mean amiss to her, if I convince her I'll endure no longer that she should thus expose herself and me. No doubt 'twill grieve her sorely. Physic's a loathsome thing till we find it gives us health, and then we are thankful to those who made us take it. Perhaps she may do so by me; if she does 'tis well; if not, and she resolves to make the house ring with reprisals, I believe (though the misfortune's great) he'll make a better figure in the world who keeps an ill wife out of doors than he that keeps her within. [*Exit.*]

ACT III

SCENE I.—*A Room in Mrs. MOTHERLY's House.*

Enter Lady HEADPIECE and Mrs. MOTHERLY.

Lady Head. So, you are acquainted with Lady Arabella, I find.

Mrs. Moth. Oh, madam, I have had the honour to know her ladyship almost from a child, and a charming woman she has made.

Lady Head. I like her prodigiously; I had some acquaintance with her in the country two years ago; but she's quite another woman here.

Mrs. Moth. Ah, madam, two years keeping company with the polite people of the town will do wonders in the improvement of a lady, so she has it but about her.

Lady Head. Now 'tis my misfortune, Mrs. Motherly, to come late to school.

Mrs. Moth. Oh! don't be discouraged at that, madam, the quickness of your ladyship's parts will easily recover your loss of a little time.

Lady Head. Oh, you flatter me! But I'll endeavour, by industry and application, to make it up; such parts as I have shall not lie idle. My lady Arabella has been so good to offer me already her introduction to those assemblies where a woman may soonest learn to make herself valuable to everybody.

Mrs. Moth. [*Aside.*] But her husband.—[*Aloud.*] Her ladyship, madam, can indeed, better than anybody, introduce you where everything that accomplishes a fine lady is practised to the last perfection. Madam, she herself is at the very tip top of it—'tis pity, poor lady, she should meet with any discouragements.

Lady Head. Discouragements! from whence pray?

Mrs. Moth. From home sometimes—my lord a —

Lady Head. What does he do?

Mrs. Moth. But one should not talk of people of quality's family concerns.

Lady Head. Oh, no matter, Mrs. Motherly, as long as it goes no farther. My lord, you were saying—

Mrs. Moth. Why, my lord, madam, is a little humoursome, they say.

Lady Head. Humoursome!

Mrs. Moth. Yes, they say, he's humoursome.

Lady Head. As how, pray?

Mrs. Moth. Why, if my poor lady perhaps does but stay out at night maybe four or five hours after he's in bed, he'll be cross.

Lady Head. What, for such a thing as that?

Mrs. Moth. Yes, he'll be cross; and then, if she happens, it may be, to be unfortunate at play, and lose a great deal of money, more than she has to pay, then madam—he'll snub.

Lady Head. Out upon him, snub such a woman as she is? I can tell you, Mrs. Motherly, I that am but a country lady, should sir Francis take upon him to snub me, in London, he'd raise a spirit would make his hair stand an end.

Mrs. Moth. Really, madam, that's the only way to deal with 'em.

Enter Miss BETTY.

And here comes pretty Miss Betty, that I believe will never be made a fool of when she's married.

Miss Bet. No, by my troth won't I. What, are you talking of my being married, mother?

Lady Head. No, miss; Mrs. Motherly was only

saying what a good wife you would make when you were so.

Miss Bet. The sooner it's tried, mother, the sooner it will be known.—Lord, here's the colonel, madam.

Enter Colonel COURTLY.

Lady Head. Colonel, your servant.

Miss Bet. Your servant, colonel.

Col. Ladies, your most obedient.—I hope, madam, the town air continues to agree with you?

Lady Head. Mighty well, sir.

Miss Bet. Oh, prodigious well, sir. We have bought a new coach, and an ocean of new clothes, and we are to go to the play to-night, and to-morrow we go to the opera, and next night we go to the assembly, and then the next night after, we—

Lady Head. Softly, miss.—Do you go to the play to-night, colonel?

Col. I did not design it, madam; but now I find there is to be such good company, I'll do myself the honour (if you'll give me leave, ladies) to come and lead you to your coach.

Lady Head. It's extremely obliging.

Miss Bet. It is, indeed, mighty well-bred.—Lord, colonel, what a difference there is between your way and our country companions! One of them would have said, What, you are aw gooing to the playhouse, then? Yes, says we, won't you come and lead us out? No, by good feggings, says he, ye ma' e'en ta' care o' yoursels, y' are awd enough; and so he'd ha' gone to get drunk at the tavern against we came home to supper.

Mrs. Moth. Ha! ha! ha! well, sure madam, your ladyship is the happiest mother in the world to have such a charming companion to your daughter.

Col. The prettiest creature upon earth!

Miss Bet. D'ye hear that, mother? Well, he's a fine gentleman really, and I think a man of admirable sense.

Lady Head. Softly, miss, he'll hear you.

Miss Bet. If he does, madam, he'll think I say true, and he'll like me never the worse for that, I hope.—Where's your niece Martilla, Mrs. Motherly?—Mama, won't you carry Martilla to the play with us?

Lady Head. With all my heart, child.

Col. She's a very pretty civil sort of woman, madam, and miss will be very happy in having such a companion in the house with her.

Miss Bet. So I shall indeed, sir, and I love her dearly already, we are growing very great together.

Lady Head. But what's become of your brother, child? I han't seen him these two hours, where is he?

Miss Bet. Indeed, mother, I don't know where he is; I saw him asleep about half an hour ago by the kitchen fire.

Col. Must not he go to the play too?

Lady Head. Yes, I think he should go, though he'll be weary on't before it's half done.

Miss Bet. Weary! yes, and then he'll sit, and yawn, and stretch like a greyhound by the fireside, till he does some nasty thing or other, that they'll turn him out of the house, so it's better to leave him at home.

Mrs. Moth. Oh, that were pity, miss. Plays will enliven him.—See, here he comes, and my niece with him.

Enter Squire HUMPHRY and MARTILLA.

Col. Your servant, sir; you come in good time, the ladies are all going to the play, and wanted you to help gallant them.

Squire Hum. And so 'twill be nine o'clock before one shall get ony supper!

Miss Bet. Supper! why your dinner is not out of your mouth yet, at least 'tis all about the brims of it.—See how greasy his chaps is, mother.

Lady Head. Nay, if he han't a mind to go, he need not.—You may stay here till your father comes home from the parliament house, and then you may eat a broiled bone together.

Miss Bet. Yes, and drink a tankard of strong beer together, and then he may tell you all he has been doing in the parliament house, and you may tell him all you have been thinking of when you were asleep in the kitchen; and then if you'll put it all down in writing, when we come from the play, I'll read it to the company.

Squire Hum. Sister I don't like your joking, and you are not a well-behaved young woman; and although my mother encourages you, my thoughts are, you are not too big to be whipped.

Miss Bet. How, sirrah?

Squire Hum. There's a civil young gentlewoman stands there is worth a hundred of you. And I believe she'll be married before you.

Miss Bet. Cots my life, I have a good mind to pull your eyes out!

Lady Head. Hold, miss, hold, don't be in such a passion neither.

Miss Bet. Mama, it is not that I am angry at anything he says to commend Martilla, for I wish she were to be married to-morrow, that I might have a dance at her wedding; but what need he abuse me for?—[*Aside.*] I wish the lout had mettle enough to be in love with her, she'd make pure sport with him.—[*Aloud.*] Does your heaviness find any inclinations moving towards the lady you admire?—Speak! are you in love with her?

Squire Hum. I am in love with nobody; and if anybody be in love with me, mayhap they had as good be quiet.

Miss Bet. Hold your tongue, I'm quite sick of you.—Come, Martilla, you are to go to the play with us.

Mart. Am I, miss? I am ready to wait upon you.

Lady Head. I believe it's time we should be going, colonel, is not it?

Col. Yes, madam, I believe it is.

Lady Head. Come then; who is there?

Enter TOM.

Is the coach at the door?

Tom. It has been there this hafe haur, so please your ladyship.

Miss Bet. And are all the people in the street gazing at it, Tom?

Tom. That are they, madam; and Roger has drank so much of his own beverage, that he's e'en as it were gotten a little drunk.

Lady Head. Not so drunk, I hope, but that he can drive us?

Tom. Yes, yes, madam, he drives best when he's a little upish. When Roger's head turns, raund go the wheels, i'faith.

Miss Bet. Never fear, mama, as long as it's to the playhouse there's no danger.

Lady Head. Well, daughter, since you are so courageous, it shan't be said I make any difficulty; and if the colonel is so gallant to have a mind to share our danger, we have room for him, if he pleases.

Col. Madam, you do me a great deal of honour, and I'm sure you give me a great deal of pleasure.

Miss Bet. Come, dear mama, away we go.

[*Exeunt Lady HEADPIECE, Miss BETTY, Colonel COURTLY, and Tom.*]

Squire Hum. [*To MARTILLA.*] I did not think you would have gone.

Mart. Oh, I love a play dearly.

[*Exit.*]

Mrs. Moth. I wonder, squire, that you would not go to the play with 'em.

Squire Hum. What needed Martilla have gone? they were enow without her.

Mrs. Moth. Oh, she was glad to go to divert herself; and, besides, my lady desired her to go with them.

Squire Hum. And so I'm left alone!

Mrs. Moth. Why, should you have cared for her company?

Squire Hum. Rather than none.

Mrs. Moth. [*Aside.*] On my conscience he's ready to cry; this is matter to think of; but here comes sir Francis.

Enter Sir FRANCIS.

How do you do, sir? I'm afraid these late parliamentary hours won't agree with you.

Sir Fran. Indeed, I like them not, Mrs. Motherly; if they would dine at twelve o'clock as we do in the country, a man might be able to drink a reasonable bottle between that and supper-time.

Mrs. Moth. That would be much better indeed, sir Francis.

Sir Fran. But then when we consider that what we undergo is in being busy for the good of our country,—Oh, the good of our country is above all things! What a noble and glorious thing it is, Mrs. Motherly, that England can boast of five hundred zealous gentlemen, all in one room, all of one mind, upon a fair occasion, to go all together by the ears for the good of their country!—Humphry, perhaps you'll be a senator in time, as your father is now; when you are, remember your country; spare nothing for the good of your country; and when you come home at the end of the sessions, you will find yourself so adored, that your country will come and dine with you every day in the week.—Oh, here's my uncle Richard.

Enter Uncle RICHARD.

Mrs. Moth. I think, sir, I had best get you a mouthful of something to stay your stomach till supper.

Sir Fran. With all my heart, for I'm almost famished.

[*Exit Mrs. MOTHERLY.*]

Squire Hum. And so shall I before my mother comes from the playhouse, so I'll go get a buttered toast.

[*Exit.*]

Sir Fran. Uncle, I hope you are well.

Unc. Rich. Nephew, if I had been sick I would not have come abroad; I suppose you are well, for I sent this morning and was informed you went out early; was it to make your court to some of the great men?

Sir Fran. Yes, uncle, I was advised to lose no time, so I went to one great man whom I had never seen before.

Unc. Rich. And who had you got to introduce you?

Sir Fran. Nobody. I remembered I had heard a wise man say, My son, be bold; so I introduced myself.

Unc. Rich. As how, I pray?

Sir Fran. Why thus, uncle; Please your lordship, says I, I am sir Francis Headpiece, of Headpiece-hall, and member of parliament for the ancient borough of Gobble-guinea. Sir, your humble servant, says my lord, though I have not the honour to know your person, I have heard you are a very honest gentleman, and I am very glad your borough has made choice of so worthy a representative; have you any service to command me? Those last words, uncle, gave me great encouragement; and though I know you have not any very great opinion of my parts, I believe you won't say I missed it now.

Unc. Rich. I hope I shall have no cause.

Sir Fran. My lord, says I, I did not design to say anything to your lordship to-day about business; but since your lordship is so kind and free, as to bid me speak if I have any service to command you, I will.

Unc. Rich. So!

Sir Fran. I have, says I, my lord, a good estate, but it's a little out at elbows, and as I desire to serve my king as well as my country, I shall be very willing to accept of a place at court.

Unc. Rich. This was bold indeed.

Sir Fran. Ecod, I shot him flying, uncle; another man would have been a month before he durst have opened his mauth about a place. But you shall hear. Sir Francis, says my lord, what sort of a place may you have turned your thoughts upon? My lord, says I, beggars must not be choosers; but some place about a thousand a-year, I believe, might do pretty well to begin with. Sir Francis, says he, I shall be glad to serve you in anything I can; and in saying these words he gave me a squeeze by the hand, as much as to say, I'll do your business. And so he turned to a lord that was there, who looked as if he came for a place too.

Unc. Rich. And so your fortune's made?

Sir Fran. Don't you think so, uncle?

Unc. Rich. Yes, for just so mine was made—twenty years ago.

Sir Fran. Why, I never knew you had a place, uncle!

Unc. Rich. Nor I neither, upon my faith, nephew. But you have been down at the house since you made your court, have not you?

Sir Fran. O yes; I would not neglect the house for ever so much.

Unc. Rich. And what may they have done there to-day, I pray?

Sir Fran. Why truly, uncle, I cannot well tell what they did. But I'll tell you what I did: I happened to make a little sort of a mistake.

Unc. Rich. How was that?

Sir Fran. Why you must know, uncle, they were all got into a sort of a hodge-podge argument for the good of the nation, which I did not well understand. However, I was convinced, and so resolved to vote aright, according to my conscience; but they made such a puzzling business out of it, when they put the question, as they call it, that, I believe, I cried ay when I should have cried no; for a sort

of a Jacobite that sate next me, took me by the hand, and said,—Sir, you are a man of honour, and a true Englishman, and I should be glad to be better acquainted with you; and so he pulled me along with the crowd into the lobby with him, when, I believe, I should have staid where I was.

Unc. Rich. And so, if you had not quite made your fortune before, you have clenched it now.—
[*Aside*] Ah, thou head of the Headpieces!—
[*Aloud*.] How now, what's the matter here?

Re-enter Lady HEADPIECE, Miss BETTY, Colonel COURTLY, Squire HUMPHRY, and MARTILLA, in disorder, some dirty, some lame, some bloody.

Sir Fran. Mercy on us! they are all killed.

Miss Bet. Not for a thousand pounds; but we have been all down in the dirt together.

Lady Head. We have had a sad piece of work on't, sir Francis; overturned in the channel as we were going to the playhouse.

Miss Bet. Over and over, papa; had it been coming from the playhouse I should not have cared a farthing.

Sir Fran. But, child, you are hurt, your face is all bloody.

Miss Bet. O sir, my new gown is all dirty.

Lady Head. The new coach is all spoiled.

Miss Bet. The glasses are all to bits.

Lady Head. Roger has put out his arm.

Miss Bet. Would he had put out his neck for making us lose the play!

Squire Hum. Poor Martilla has scratched her little finger.

Lady Head. And here's the poor colonel, nobody asks what he has done.—I hope, sir, you have got no harm?

Col. Only a little wounded with some pins I met with about your ladyship.

Lady Head. I am sorry anything about me should do you harm.

Col. If it does, madam, you have that about you, if you please, will be my cure. I hope your ladyship feels nothing amiss?

Lady Head. Nothing at all, though we did roll about together strangely.

Col. We did indeed. I'm sure we rolled so, that my poor hands were got once—I don't know where they were got.—But her ladyship I see will pass by slips. [*Aside*.]

Sir Fran. It would have been pity the colonel should have received any damage in his services to the ladies; he is the most complaisant man to 'em, uncle; always ready when they have occasion for him.

Unc. Rich. Then I believe, nephew, they'll never let him want business.

Sir Fran. Oh, but they should not ride the free horse to death neither.—Come, colonel, you'll stay and drink a bottle, and eat a little supper with us, after your misfortune?

Col. Sir, since I have been prevented from attending the ladies to the play, I shall be very proud to obey their commands here at home.

Sir Fran. A prodigious civil gentleman, uncle; and yet as bold as Alexander upon occasion.

Unc. Rich. Upon a lady's occasion.

Sir Fran. Ha, ha, you are a wag, unclé! but I believe he'd storm anything.

Unc. Rich. Then I believe your citadel may be in danger. [*Aside*.]

Sir Fran. Uncle, won't you break your rule for once, and sup from home?

Unc. Rich. The company will excuse me, nephew; they'll be freer without me; so good night to them and you.

Lady Head. Good night to you, sir, since you won't stay.—Come, colonel.

Unc. Rich. [*Aside*.] Methinks this facetious colonel is got upon a pretty, familiar, easy foot already with the family of the Headpieces—hum.

[*Exit*.]

Sir Fran. Come, my lady, let's all in, and pass the evening cheerfully. And d'ye hear, wife—a word in your ear—I have got a promise of a place in court, of a thousand a-year, he, hem! [*Exeunt*.]

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—Lady ARABELLA's Dressing-room.

Enter Lady ARABELLA, as just up, walking pensively to her toilet, followed by TRUSTY.

Lady Ara. Well, sure never woman had such luck!—these devilish dice!—Sit up all night; lose all one's money, and then—how like a hag I look!—[*Sits at her toilet, turning her purse inside out.*] Not a guinea—worth less by a hundred pounds than I was at one a'clock this morning—and then—I was worth nothing—what is to be done, Trusty?

Trus. I wish I were wise enough to tell you, madam: but if there comes in any good company to breakfast with your ladyship, perhaps you may have a run of better fortune.

Lady Ara. But I han't a guinea to try my fortune.—Let me see—who was that impertinent man, that was so saucy last week about money, that I

was forced to promise, once more, he should have what I owed him this morning?

Trus. Oh, I remember, madam; it was your old mercer Shortyard, that you turned off a year ago, because he would trust you no longer.

Lady Ara. That's true; and I think I bid the steward keep thirty guineas out of some money he was paying me, to stop his odious mouth.

Trus. Your ladyship did so.

Lady Ara. Prithee, Trusty, run and see whether the wretch has got the money yet; if not, tell the steward I have occasion for it myself; run quickly. [*Trusty runs to the door.*]

Trus. Ah, madam, he's just a-paying it away now, in the hall.

Lady Ara. Stop him! quick, quick, dear Trusty.

Trus. Hem, hem, Mr. Moneybag, a word with you quickly.

Mon. [*Within*.] I'll come presently.

Trus. Presently won't do, you must come this moment.

Mon. I'm but just paying a little money.

Trus. Cods my life, paying money! is the man distracted? Come here, I tell you, to my lady this moment, quick.

Enter MONEYBAG to the door, with a purse in his hand.

My lady says, you must not pay the money to-day, there's a mistake in the account, which she must examine; and she's afraid too there was a false guinea or two left in the purse, which might disgrace her.—[*Twitches the purse from him.*] But she's too busy to look for 'em just now, so you must bid Mr. What-d'ye-call-'em come another time.—[*Exit MONEYBAG.*] There they are, madam.—[*Gives Lady ARABELLA the money.*] The poor things were so near gone they made me tremble. I fancy your ladyship will give me one of those false guineas for good luck.—[*Takes a guinea.*] Thank you, madam.

Lady Ara. Why, I did not bid you take it.

Trus. No, but your ladyship looked as if you were just going to bid me, so I took it to save your ladyship the trouble of speaking.

Lady Ara. Well, for once—but hark—I think I hear the man making a noise yonder.

Trus. Yes, I don't expect he'll go out of the house quietly. I'll listen.

Lady Ara. Do. [Trusy goes to the door.]

Trus. He's in a bitter passion with poor Moneybag; I believe he'll beat him.—Lord, how he swears!

Lady Ara. And a sober citizen too! that's a shame.

Trus. He says he will speak with you, madam, though the devil held your door.—Lord! he's coming hither full drive, but I'll lock him out.

Lady Ara. No matter, let him come: I'll reason with him.

Trus. But he's a saucy fellow for all that.

Enter SHORTHARD.

What would you have, sir?

Short. I would have my due, mistress.

Trus. That would be—to be well cudgelled, master, for coming so familiarly where you should not come.

Lady Ara. Do you think you do well, sir, to intrude into my dressing-room?

Short. Madam, I sold my goods to you in your dressing-room, I don't know why I mayn't ask for my money there.

Lady Ara. You are very short, sir.

Short. Your ladyship won't complain of my patience being so?

Lady Ara. I complain of nothing that ought not to be complained of; but I hate ill manners.

Short. So do I, madam—but this is the seventeenth time I have been ordered to come, with good manners, for my money, to no purpose.

Lady Ara. Your money, man! is that the matter? Why it has lain in the steward's hands this week for you.

Short. Madam, you yourself appointed me to come this very morning for it.

Lady Ara. But why did you come so late then?

Short. So late! I came soon enough, I thought.

Lady Ara. That thinking wrong makes us liable to a world of disappointments; if you had

thought of coming one minute sooner, you had had your money.

Short. Gad bless me, madam; I had the money as I thought, I'm sure it was telling out, and I was writing a receipt for't.

Trus. Why, there you thought wrong again, master.

Lady Ara. Yes, for you should never think of writing a receipt till the money is in your pocket.

Short. Why, I did think 'twas in my pocket.

Trus. Look you, thinking again! Indeed, Mr. Shorthard, you make so many blunders, 'tis impossible but you must suffer by it, in your way of trade. I'm sorry for you, and you'll be undone.

Short. And well I may, when I sell my goods to people that won't pay me for 'em, till the interest of my money eats out all my profit: I sold them so cheap, because I thought I should be paid the next day.

Trus. Why, there again! there's another of your thoughts. Paid the next day! and you han't been paid this twelvemonth, you see.

Short. Oons, I han't been paid at all, mistress.

Lady Ara. Well, tradesmen are strange, unreasonable creatures, refuse to sell people any more things, and then quarrel with 'em because they don't pay for those they have had already. Now, what can you say to that, Mr. Shorthard?

Short. Say! why—'sdeath, madam, I don't know what you talk of, I don't understand your argument.

Lady Ara. Why, what do you understand, man?

Short. Why, I understand that I have had above a hundred pounds due to me a year ago; that I came by appointment just now to receive it; that it proved at last to be but thirty instead of a hundred and ten; and that, while the steward was telling even that out, and I was writing the receipt, comes Mrs. Pop here, and the money was gone. But I'll be bantered no longer if there's law in England. Say no more, Shorthard. [Exit.]

Trus. What a passion the poor devil's in!

Lady Ara. Why, truly, one can't deny but he has some present cause for a little ill-humour; but when one has things of so much greater consequence on foot, one can't trouble oneself about making such creatures easy; so call for breakfast, Trusty, and set the hazard-table ready; if there comes no company I'll play a little by myself.

Enter Lord LOVERULE.

Lord Love. Pray what offence, madam, have you given to a man I met with just now as I came in?

Lady Ara. People who are apt to take offence do it for small matters, you know.

Lord Love. I shall be glad to find this so; but he says that you have owed him above a hundred pounds this twelvemonth; that he has been here forty times by appointment for it, to no purpose; and that coming here this morning upon positive assurance from yourself, he was tricked out of the money while he was writing a receipt for it, and sent away without a farthing.

Lady Ara. Lord, how these shopkeepers will lie!

Lord Love. What then is the business? For some ground the man must have to be in such a passion.

Lady Ara. I believe you'll rather wonder to see

me so calm, when I tell you he had the insolence to intrude into my very dressing-room here, with a story without a head or tail.—You know, Trusty, we could not understand one word he said, but when he swore—good Lord! how the wretch did swear!

Trus. I never heard the like, for my part.

Lord Love. And all this for nothing?

Lady Ara. So it proved, my lord, for he got nothing by it.

Lord Love. His swearing I suppose was for his money, madam. Who can blame him?

Lady Ara. If he swore for money he should be put in the pillory.

Lord Love. Madam, I won't be bantered, nor sued by this man for your extravagances. Do you owe him the money or not?

Lady Ara. He says I do, but such fellows will say anything.

Lord Love. [*Aside.*] Provoking!—[*Aloud.*] Did not I desire an account from you, of all your debts, but six months since, and give you money to clear them?

Lady Ara. My lord, you can't imagine how accounts make my head ache.

Lord Love. That won't do. The steward gave you two hundred pounds besides but last week; where's that?

Lady Ara. Gone.

Lord Love. Gone! where?

Lady Ara. Half the town over I believe by this time.

Lord Love. Madam, madam, this can be endured no longer! and before a month passes expect to find me—

Lady Ara. Hist, my lord, here's company.

Enter Captain TOUPEE.

Captain Toupee, your servant; what, nobody with you? do you come quite alone?

Capt. 'Slife, I thought to find company enough here.—My lord, your servant.—What a deuse, you look as if you had been up all night. I'm sure I was in bed but three hours; I would you'd give me some coffee.

Lady Ara. Some coffee there, tea too, and chocolate. [*Exit TRUSTY.*]

Capt. [*Singing a minuet and dancing.*] Well, what a strange fellow am I to be thus brisk, after losing all my money last night!—But upon my soul you look sadly.

Lady Ara. No matter for that, if you'll let me win a little of your money this morning.

Capt. What, with that face? Go, go wash it, go wash it, and put on some handsome things; you looked a good likely woman last night; I would not much have cared if you had run five hundred pounds in my debt; but if I play with you this morning, egad I'd advise you to win, for I won't take your personal security at present for a guinea.

Lord Love. [*Aside.*] To what a nauseous freedom do women of quality of late admit these trifling fops? and there's a morning exercise will give 'em claim to greater freedoms still.—[*Points to the hazard-table.*] Some course must be taken. [*Exit.*]

Capt. What, is my lord gone? He looked me thought as if he did not delight much in my company. Well, peace and plenty attend him for your

ladyship's sake, and those—who have now and then the honour to win a hundred pounds of you.

[*Goes to the table singing and throws.*]

Lady Ara. [*Twitching the box from him.*] What, do you intend to win all the money upon the table?—Seven's the main—set me a million, Toupee.

Capt. I set you two, my queen—six to seven!

Lady Ara. Six.—The world's my own.

Both. Ha! ha! ha!

Lady Ara. Oh, that my lord had but spirit enough about him to let me play for a thousand pounds a night—but here comes country company.

Enter Lady HEADPIECE, Miss BETTY, Mrs. MOTHERLY, and Colonel COURTLY.

Your servant, madam, good morrow to you.

Lady Head. And to you, madam, we are come to breakfast with you. Lord, are you got to those pretty things already! [*Points to the dice.*]

Lady Ara. You see we are not such idle folks in town as you country ladies take us to be; we are no sooner out of our beds, but we are at our work.

Miss Bet. Will dear lady Arabella give us leave, mother, to do a stitch or two with her?

[*Takes the box and throws.*]

Capt. The pretty lively thing!

Lady Ara. With all her heart; what says your mama?

Lady Head. She says, she don't love to sit with her hands before her, when other people's are employed.

Capt. And this is the prettiest little sociable work, men and women can all do together at it.

Lady Head. Colonel, you are one with us, are you not?

Lady Ara. O, I'll answer for him, he'll be out at nothing.

Capt. In a facetious way; he is the politest person; he will lose his money to the ladies so civilly, and will win theirs with so much good breeding; and he will be so modest to 'em before company, and so impudent to 'em in a dark corner. Ha! colonel!

Lady Head. So I found him, I'm sure, last night.—Mercy on me, an ounce of virtue less than I had, and sir Francis had been undone.

Capt. Colonel, I smoke you.

Col. And a fine character you give the ladies of me, to help me.

Capt. I give 'em just the character of you they like, modest and brave.—Come ladies, to business; look to your money, every woman her hand upon her purse.

Miss Bet. Here's mine, captain.

Capt. Oh, the little soft velvet one!—and it's as full.—Come, lady Blowze, rattle your dice and away with 'em.

Lady Ara. Six—at all—five to six—five—eight—at all again—nine to eight—nine.

Enter Sir FRANCIS, and stands gazing at them.

Seven's the main—at all for ever! [*Throws out.*]

Miss Bet. Now, mama, let's see what you can do.

[*Lady HEADPIECE takes the box.*]

Lady Head. Well, I'll warrant you, daughter.

Miss Bet. If you do, I'll follow a good example.

Lady Head. Eight's the main—don't spare me, gentlemen, I fear you not—have at you all—seven to eight—seven.

Capt. Eight, lady, eight.—Five pounds if you please.

Lady Ara. Three, kinswoman.

Col. Two, madam.

Miss Bet. And one for miss, mama.—And now let's see what I can do.—[*Aside.*] If I should win enough this morning to buy me another new gown—O bless me! there they go!—Seven!—Come captain, set me boldly, I want to be at a hand-ful.

Capt. There's two for you, miss.

Miss Bet. I'll at 'em, though I die for't.

Sir Fran. Ah my poor child, take care!

[*Runs to stop the throw.*]

Miss Bet. There.

Capt. Out—twenty pounds, young lady.

Sir Fran. False dice, sir.

Capt. False dice, sir! I scorn your words.—Twenty pounds, madam.

Miss Bet. Undone! undone!

Sir Fran. She shan't pay you a farthing, sir; I won't have miss cheated.

Capt. Cheated, sir!

Lady Head. What do you mean, sir Francis, to disturb the company, and abuse the gentleman thus?

Sir Fran. I mean to be in a passion.

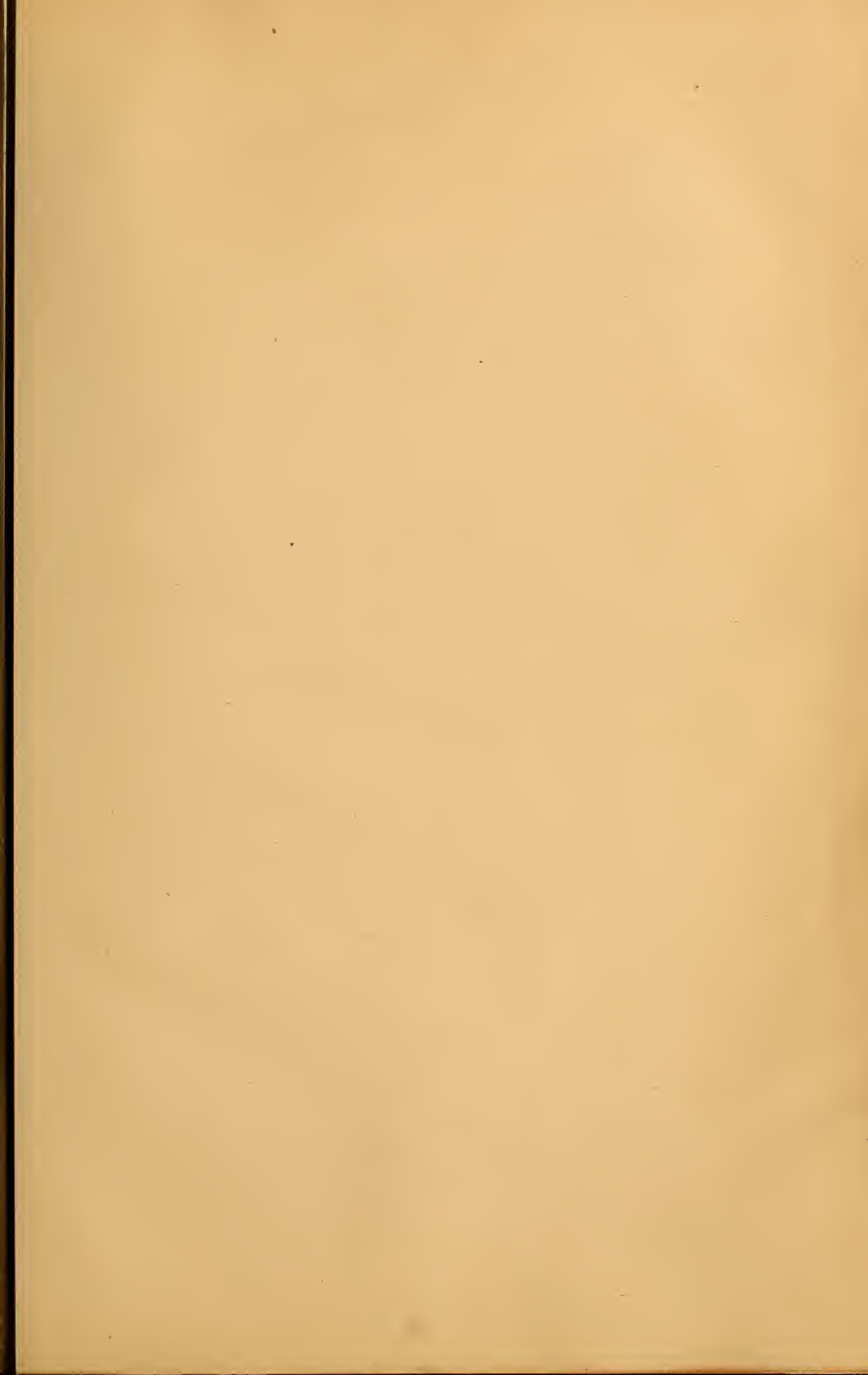
Lady Head. And why will you be in a passion, sir Francis?

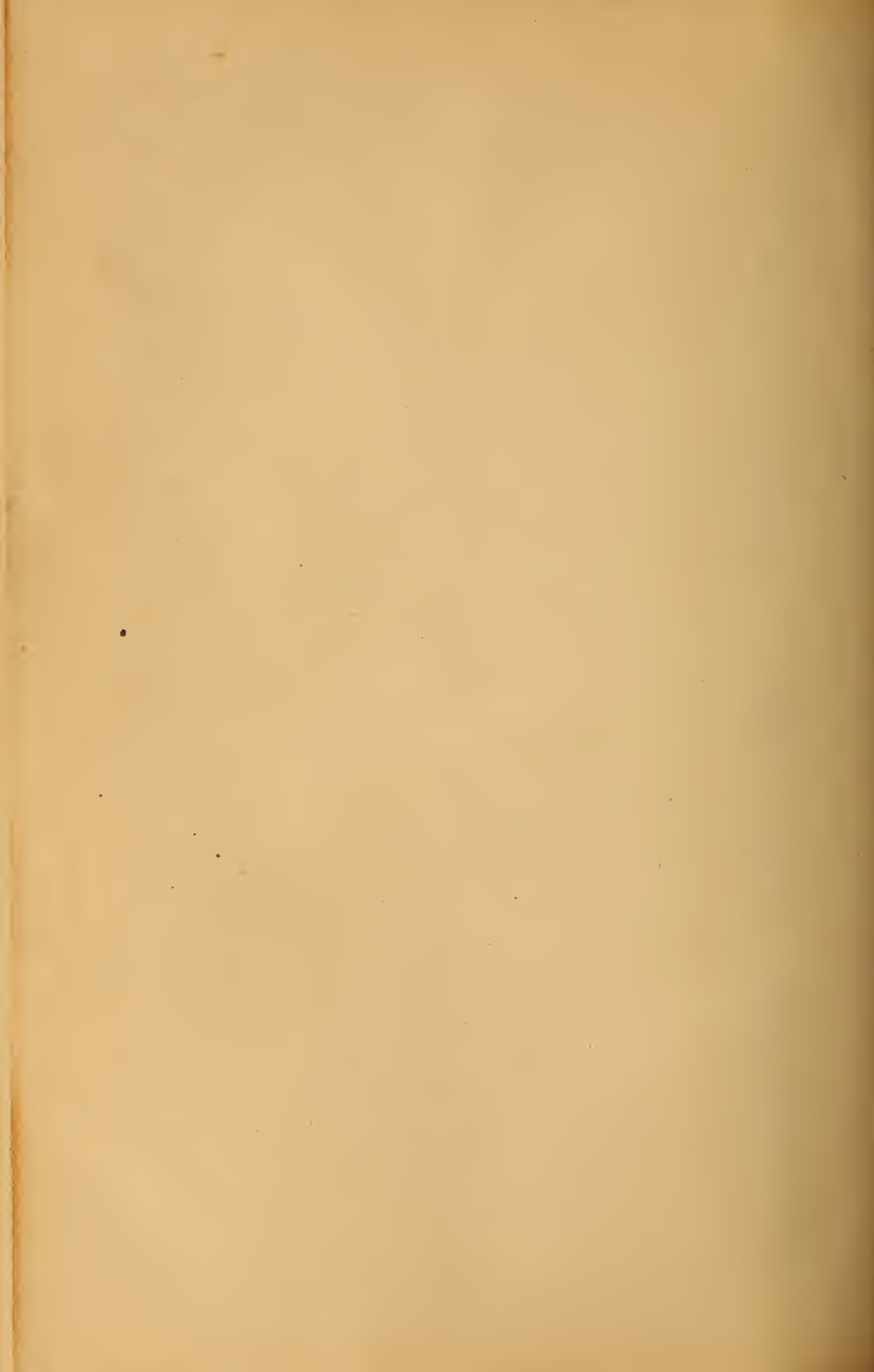
Sir Fran. Because I came here to breakfast with my lady there, before I went down to the House, expecting to find my family set round a civil table with her, upon some plumcake, hot rolls, and a cup of strong beer; instead of which, I find these good women staying their stomachs with a box and dice, and that man there, with the strange periwig, making a good hearty meal upon my wife and daughter—

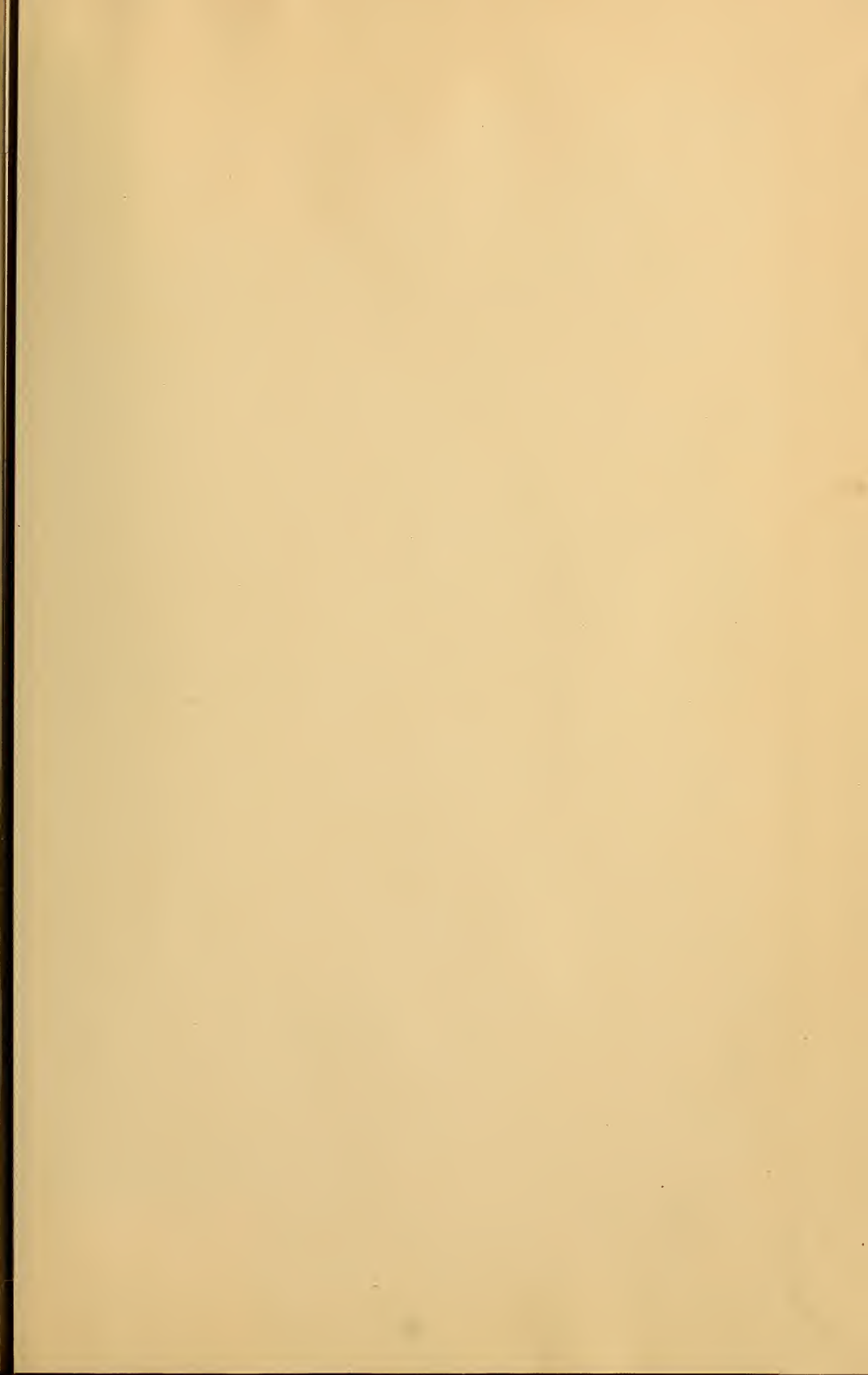
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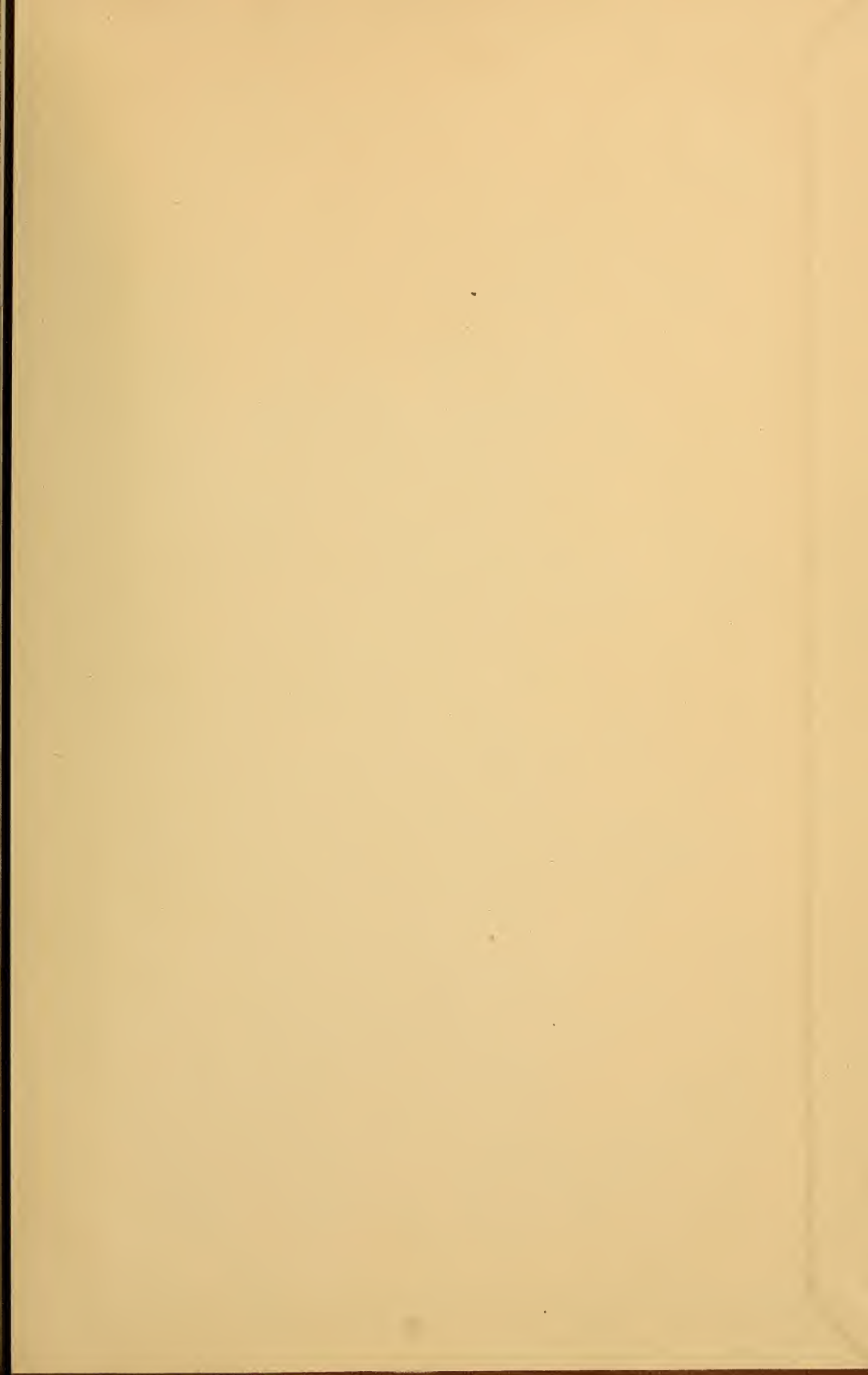




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